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First century of Christianity

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THE
FIRST CENTURY
OF
CHRISTIANITY

BY
HOMERSHAM COX, M.A.

A JUDGE OF COUNTY COURTS
AUTHOR OF 'THE INSTITUTIONS OF ENGLISH GOVERNMENT'
'ANTIENT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS'
AND OTHER WORKS

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THE
FIRST CENTURY OF CHRISTIANITY



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TO THE RIGHT HON.

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE, M.P.

DEAR SIR,

With your usual kindness you allow me to dedicate this volume to you.

In former years it was my great privilege to have frequent conversations with you on subjects of public interest, and I was deeply impressed by the frankness with which you expressed your opinions, the prodigious extent of your learning, and the uniform courtesy and generosity with which you spoke of political opponents.

To be permitted to inscribe the name of an accomplished scholar, who is also the most illustrious statesman of modern times, upon these pages is no small compensation for the toil and anxiety which they have cost me. If they should appear to you unworthy of that honour, I will plead by way of apology the words of Cicero :—*Utinam modo conata efficere possim. Rem enim (quod te non fugit) magnam complexus sum et gravem et plurimi otii, quo ego maxime egeo.*

I am, dear Sir,

Yours most faithfully,

HOMERSHAM COX.

TONBRIDGE: Dec. 1885.

PREFACE.

THIS work is an attempt to present in a popular and concise form an account of the Church in the first century of the Christian era.

The multitude of books which deal with various branches of this subject is so vast that any addition to their number may seem at first sight superfluous. But the design of this essay is distinct. The standard treatises are usually of great size, discuss theological questions, are addressed to the learned, and are rarely 'understood of the people;' whereas this volume is a mere compendium of the history of early Christianity given in as simple a form as possible; and religious and doctrinal topics are scrupulously excluded.

The Christian writers of the Apostolic and next succeeding age are remarkable for the sobriety and simplicity of their language, and are undoubtedly truthful. Far different from them were the majority of ecclesiastical scribes in the middle ages. Most of these authors were strangely uncritical and credulous, and mixed legend and history together so indiscriminately that their works are almost valueless for historical purposes. The great ecclesiastical historians of modern times—among whom English divines of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries hold a conspicuous position—write in a very different

spirit. Their compositions exhibit prodigious learning and conscientious research, and yet even they occasionally adopt conclusions which are modified by subsequent investigation.

The extreme difficulty of writing a history of the First Century of Christianity arises from the fragmentary nature of the materials. The apostles and evangelists, addressing men of their own age, naturally deemed it unnecessary to record many events and circumstances with which their hearers were familiar. For instance, the New Testament gives very little information respecting the lives and acts of the apostles after the period covered by S. Luke's narrative. The churches of the first century had indeed their own records or registers, and many of these were extant in the times of Tertullian and Eusebius, and were examined by those writers, as they expressly state. But these precious documents have long since perished, and only fragments have been preserved. The composition of a history of the first century is mainly a process of patching together these and other fragments, and that process has occasioned endless controversy. Every conclusion of importance has been discussed and re-discussed, but it may be safely asserted that the effect of repeated investigation has been to eliminate errors and to add to our knowledge of the primitive church. A powerful apparatus of criticism has been applied to the earliest Christian writings; of all this thought and labour the most recent inquirer is the heir; and consequently—paradoxical as the statement might otherwise appear—the history of the first Christians is better understood now than it was fourteen or fifteen hundred years ago.

Again, the materials themselves have received valuable accessions in modern times by the discovery of precious manuscripts. Some of these discoveries are very remarkable,

and among them the following examples may be cited. In the last century the learned Muratori found in the great Ambrosian Library at Milan the earliest known list of the Canonical Books of the New Testament. Three Syriac Epistles of S. Ignatius were found by Archdeacon Tattam at Nitria in Egypt, in the year 1838. Ten years later Dr. Cureton discovered among the manuscripts in the British Museum the 'Ancient Syriac Documents,' subsequently edited by him, some portions of which are as old as the second century. The Treatise of Hippolytus on Heresies, first published in 1851, gives valuable information respecting the history of the canon of the New Testament. A most remarkable discovery was made at Constantinople in 1877 of a missing portion of the Epistle of S. Clement to the Corinthians; and even within the last two years a valuable Christian document of the second century—the 'Teaching of the Twelve Apostles'—has been brought to light.

The present work is founded almost entirely upon writings of the first and second centuries. The writers of those times were obviously more likely to be well informed respecting primitive Christianity than later authors, and were free from temptation to make mis-statements.

In quotations from the New Testament the Authorised Version has not always been adopted in this book; but whenever a different translation is adopted the reason for it is explained either in the text or in the notes.

Every reference has been very carefully verified; and, in the very few instances in which authorities are cited at second hand, that circumstance is noted. It has, however, been one of the guiding principles of this essay to avoid bare references, and to quote copiously the authorities themselves, so that the

reader may be able to judge for himself of the nature and value of their testimony.

To that very eminent Oriental and Hebrew scholar, the Reverend John Meadows Rodwell; and two very learned Greek scholars, the Reverend John Langhorne, of Rochester Cathedral School, and the Reverend Thomas Walker, of Tonbridge School, the Author is under the greatest obligations, for the extreme kindness with which they have examined many of the proof-sheets of this work, and for their most valuable suggestions and corrections.

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THE FIRST CENTURY OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

THE ROMAN PROVINCES.

THE rapid diffusion of Christianity in the first century after it began to be preached is one of the marvels of history. In order to understand how that marvel was accomplished we must know something of the extent and condition of the Roman empire.

Rome, it has often been said, was the mistress of the world; and this statement is substantially correct. But the world of classic writers was far smaller than ours. Their geographical knowledge was confined to the northern hemisphere, and to much less than half of that. Eastward, the greater part of India and China was unknown. Westward, their knowledge did not extend beyond the Straits of Gibraltar. Poets spoke of islands of the blest which existed somewhere in what we call the Atlantic Ocean. But they existed only in poetic visions; and the vast continent of America was utterly unknown.

The world with which the Romans were most familiar included the populous and vast countries which bordered on the Mediterranean and Black Sea. These great inland waters were the highways of the ancient world and the chief means of communication. Indeed, they answered to a great extent to our modern railways. But the magnetic compass was unknown, and long voyages out of sight of land were therefore

impracticable. Navigation was carried on by coasting vessels, which generally lay to at night. 'A night and a day have I been in the deep,' says S. Paul, including this among the greatest trials of his life.

A glance at a map of the western hemisphere shows how extremely well the Mediterranean and the adjoining seas were adapted for intercourse restricted to short voyages. Those waters laved the shores of the fairest and most illustrious countries upon earth. Egypt, Palestine, Greece, Italy, and Asia Minor—all the nations most renowned for arts, letters, or industry, besides Spain and Southern Gaul—were in this way connected with Rome.

In the reign of Cæsar Augustus, says S. Luke, a decree went out that all the world should be taxed. The word which in our usual English version is translated 'taxed,' and in the Revised Version 'enrolled,' would be better rendered 'assessed.' The nature of that assessment will be considered hereafter. For the present this passage is cited to show that S. Luke considered the world—in the Greek, the inhabited earth—co-extensive with the Roman empire.

In somewhat the same way the poet Ovid says that when Jupiter looks down from heaven upon the earth, he cannot behold anything which is not Roman—

*Jupiter arce sua totum cum spectet in orbem
Nil nisi Romanum quod tueatur habet :*

and this statement does not exceed the limits of poetical license. In the reign of Augustus, however, the empire had not reached its greatest extent. His successors added many important provinces, including Assyria and Mesopotamia in the east and our island of Britain in the west. But it was the policy of Augustus to contract rather than widen the boundaries of the Roman dominions. In a State document written by his own hand, and read to the Senate immediately after his decease, he advised that the limits of the empire should not be enlarged.¹ His successor Tiberius acted on the same principle. Tacitus describes him sneeringly as a prince careless of extending the empire.² But

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, b. i. c. 11.

² Tacitus, *Ib.* b. iv. c. 32.

Tacitus never loses an opportunity of disparaging Tiberius; and the context of the passage just cited shows that the historian himself preferred a spirited foreign policy to the arts of peace.

How did Rome manage to govern her far off provinces? Considering the vast distances of many of them, the slowness of communication, and the turbulent spirit of many of the subject races, the success with which she contrived to keep her wide domains in order is wonderful.

A brief survey of the system of Roman provincial government will greatly help us in examining the condition of the Jews and Christian converts throughout that vast empire. In the first place it may be observed that during the first century of Christianity, though the government had ceased to be republican, consuls continued to be appointed annually as in the republican times. After their year of office consuls usually became proconsuls or governors of provinces. These valuable appointments were looked upon as perquisites of the consular office. The provinces were generally distributed by lot, but the distribution was sometimes arranged by agreement among the persons entitled to them. A province was generally held for a year, but the time was often prolonged. Each governor had originally to account at Rome only for his administration, but a law was passed about sixty years before the Christian era, by which every governor was obliged to deposit two copies of his account in the two chief cities of his province, and to forward another copy to the treasury at Rome.¹

The provinces were not all governed alike. Other great officers and servants of the State besides consuls were appointed governors. The posts being lucrative and honourable were regarded as rewards for eminent public services. For instance, when Agricola returned (A.D. 84) from his successful occupation of Britain, the honours of a triumph and public statue were decreed to him by the Senate, and the province of Syria, which happened to be vacant, was offered to him.²

¹ Smith, *Dict. of Antiquities*, 'Provincia.'

² Tacitus, *Agricola*, c. 39.

The tenure of office differed in different placés. Julius Cæsar had decreed that persons of prætorian rank should hold provinces for only one year, and persons of consular rank for only two years. Cicero, in his second philippic against Antony, reproaches him for extending the time. Augustus subsequently prolonged the stay of the proconsuls, and this policy was continued by his successor. The reason assigned was a curious one, and shows that in frequent instances the province suffered from mal-administration. It was supposed that if the tenure of office were longer, the governors would not be in so great haste to get rich, as when they had only one year in which to fleece their unfortunate subjects.¹

Still it must not be inferred that the dependencies of the Roman empire were always or even usually ill-governed. On the contrary, we have abundant proofs of care bestowed to prevent or punish abuses of power. The provincials had a right which they frequently exercised of appealing to the Roman Senate or Emperor, and a governor who betrayed the interests of the State was liable to the pénalties of *majestas*, which is nearly equivalent to the English crime of treason.

A governor might be impeached very much in the same way, to take a familiar instance, as Warren Hastings was impeached in the last century upon charges of mis-government of India. A very remarkable instance of the kind is the prosecution of Verres, Governor of Sicily, of which we have ample details in two celebrated speeches of Cicero. The circumstances occurred more than seventy years before the Christian era, but they well illustrate the condition of the provinces at a later period. Verres was prosecuted under a law called, from the name of its author, the Calpurnian law, by which a body of jurors presided over by a prætor was appointed to try offences committed by ex-governors. Cicero himself went to Sicily to collect evidence, and worked so assiduously that in fifty days he was ready to open the impeachment; and armed with a mass of documents and accompanied by a crowd of witnesses he took ship for Rome, where he arrived

¹ Dion. lv. 28. Josephus, *Antiq.* xviii. 7, s. 5.

two months before he was expected. The court met in the Temple of Castor.

From the foot of Mount Taurus, from the shores of the Black Sea, from the many cities of the Grecian mainland, from many islands of the Ægean, from every city or market town of Sicily deputations thronged to Rome. In the porticoes and on the steps of the temple, in the area of the Forum, in the colonnades that surrounded it, on the housetops and on the overlooking declivities were stationed dense and eager crowds of impoverished heirs and their guardians, bankrupt publicans and corn merchants, fathers bewailing their children carried off to the prætor's harem, children mourning for their parents dead in the prætor's dungeons.¹

The formal charge against Verres was that he had acted rapaciously and cruelly towards Roman citizens and allies, and had carried off from Sicily forty millions of sesterces. The examination of the witnesses lasted nine days; but Verres soon saw that the evidence was too strong for him, and on the third day after the commencement of the trial he fled from Rome. He was condemned to banishment, and heavily fined.

It would be easy to multiply instances of the prosecution of governors of provinces. One which has more immediate relation to the subject before us is the recall of Pontius Pilate from the government of Judæa.

It has been already stated that governors of provinces were required to keep official records of their administration. The records so kept by Pilate are twice mentioned by Justin Martyr.² In one place, after referring to the Crucifixion, he says, 'And that these things did happen you can ascertain from the acts of Pontius Pilate,' and in another chapter he again mentions these acts. These accounts sent by Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius are supposed to have been destroyed at an early period, in consequence of the unfavourable appeals which Christians constantly made to them.³ Tertullian⁴ says also, 'Pilate, who in his conscience was persuaded of the inno-

¹ Smith's *Greek and Roman Biography*, Art. 'Verres.'

² Justin Martyr, *Apology*, cc. 35 and 48.

³ *Ante Nicene Library*, vol. ii. p. 37 note.

⁴ Tertullian, *Apology*, c. 21.

cence of Christ, sent a full account of all these transactions to Tiberius Cæsar.' In the very curious 'Ancient Syriac Documents' it is stated that Pilate was recalled on account of his conduct with reference to the death of Christ. But this statement is not probable, for Pilate was not deposed until seven years after the Crucifixion. That may possibly have been one of the circumstances which led to his recall, though there is no trustworthy evidence that this was the case. Josephus attributes the recall of Pilate to an entirely different cause—complaints of the Samaritans. They charged him with extreme severity in repressing certain tumults which occurred in Samaria. His superior officer, the legate of Syria, sent him to Rome to answer this accusation. He arrived there immediately after the death of Tiberius, but was banished by the succeeding Emperor. Eusebius states that Pilate ended his life by suicide.¹

Pilate was subordinate to the Governor of Syria. Local governors were not all independent of each other. Sometimes districts were grouped together for the purposes of administration. For example, Asia Minor under the Romans was divided into districts, each comprising several towns, and having its chief city, in which the courts were held from time to time by the proconsul or the legate of the province, and where the taxes from the subordinate towns were collected. Each of these aggregates was styled in Latin *conventus*; in Greek, *diocese*.

The connection of Judæa with Syria seems to have been somewhat of the same kind. The chief ruler of Syria was a Legate appointed by Cæsar; the chief ruler of Judæa was a subordinate officer called a *procurator*. Galilee also appears to have been at one time under the government of another procurator. At the time when Felix, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, ruled in Judæa, his colleague in Galilee was Cumanus. The two procurators were unable to keep the people in order, and, as Tacitus tells us, the whole province would have been in a blaze of war if Quadratus, the Governor

¹ *Ancient Syriac Documents*, translated by Cureton, p. 18; Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xviii. c. 4; Eusebius, *History*, b. ii. c. 7.

of Syria, had not interposed and restored tranquillity. By the command of the Emperor Felix and Cumanus were tried for misrule. The latter was punished, but Felix, favoured by the Governor Quadratus, escaped.¹

This is another instance of the care exercised by the central government at Rome to check abuses of power by provincial rulers. Abuses, no doubt, occurred, but it was the general policy of Rome to repress them and to conciliate the subject nations. We find the Jews in several instances sending embassies to Rome praying for redress of grievances, and this they would not have done if there had been no hope of redress. On the death of Herod, immediately after the birth of Christ, they petitioned Augustus for an alteration in the form of government. Another illustration of this policy of Rome is the government, at a later period, of our own island of Britain by Agricola, who, during his occupation, adopted peaceful measures in order to conciliate the inhabitants. Tacitus² states that he encouraged and assisted them in building public edifices and private houses, and instructed the sons of the chiefs in the liberal arts, and endeavoured to overcome their repugnance to the Roman language.

To the same purpose may be cited the frequent instances in which the State liberally gave succour to provinces suffering from great disasters. Thus, when twelve cities of Asia, in the time of Tiberius, were almost destroyed by earthquake, the Emperor granted 100,000 sesterces for their relief and five years' exemption from tribute.³ A few years later similar calamities occurred at Cybira in Asia and Ægium in Achaia, and on those occasions the two cities were relieved from tribute for three years.⁴ In another instance—that of an earthquake at Laodicea in the time of Nero—Tacitus thinks it worthy of notice that this renowned city was rebuilt by the exertions of the inhabitants themselves, without assistance from Rome;⁵ and he evidently regards this as an exception to the general practice.

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, b. xii. c. 54. Tacitus calls Quadratus *Syriæ rector*.

² *Agricola*, c. 21.

³ Tacitus, *Annals*, ii. 47.

⁴ *Ib.* b. iv.

⁵ *Ib.* b. xiv. c. 27.

Cicero has given a very interesting account of his own administration of the proconsulate of Cilicia. The story is coloured with his usual egotism, but still there is sufficient evidence that his administration was just and humane. We may be sure that he set off to his new sphere of duty with all the pomp usual on such occasions. When consuls and prætors left Rome for the provinces they wore the *paludamentum*—a rich purple robe—and were accompanied in great state by lictors to the gate of the capital. Cicero was not the man to disregard ceremonies of this kind; but when he reached his destination he was assiduous and punctual in the discharge of his duties. At Laodicea he found many abuses needing correcting. His predecessor, Appius, had been a rapacious ruler; and, as Cicero expresses it in one of his letters, his conduct was more like that of a savage beast than of a man. The new governor saw the misery to which the provincials were reduced, and determined not to impose on them new burdens. He would not even take the perquisites due to himself. The consequence was that he gained unbounded popularity, and crowds flocked to see the prodigy of a pro-consul travelling through the country without plundering it.¹

The Roman government of provinces was a mixture of good and evil; but as far as we can judge from scanty information, the policy of central government at Rome was humane and just, though it was not always successful to prevent abuses. The well-known lines of Virgil, in which he advises the Romans to rule the nations peaceably, to be conciliatory to the obedient, and overcome the rebellious:—

*Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento ;
Hæ tibi erunt artes ; pacisque imponere morem,
Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos ;*²

undoubtedly reflected the policy of the earlier Cæsars.

The provinces—it was said above—were not all governed alike. Some were in the gift of the Emperor; others in the

¹ *Life of Cicero*, c. 18.

² *Æneid*, vi. 851.

gift of the Senate. Some were governed by Roman law; others retained their own laws.

Augustus took charge of those provinces in which a large military force was required, and left the care of the rest to the Senate. It was the latter kind—the senatorial—which were governed by consuls after their consulships, under the title of pro-consuls. The other class—the imperial provinces—were ruled by *legates* or *proprators*, who were regarded as representatives of the Emperor. They held office during his pleasure, and he delegated to them both military command and civil jurisdiction. But the frequent transference of provinces from the Senate to the Emperor, or from the Emperor to the Senate, renders it difficult sometimes to determine the proper style of the governor.

In the reign of the Emperor Claudius, A.D. 52, it was decreed that judicial decisions of the imperial procurators should be as valid as those of the Emperor.¹ But many cities and states retained their autonomy—that is, preserved their own laws and chose their own magistrates. Strabo mentions that Marseilles was not subject to the provincial legates. So, likewise, the Syrians enjoyed autonomy until Claudius deprived them of it, because they put Roman citizens to death.² Again, during that war against the Jews which ended in the final overthrow of Jerusalem, Titus offered them the privilege of autonomy if they would submit to the authority of the Romans.

Of the value of this privilege Cicero gives proof in one of his epistles. Speaking of certain Asiatic cities, he says that having obtained autonomy and the use of their own laws they were restored to life.³

The manner in which the revenues of the Roman provinces were collected requires some notice.

The public taxes were let or farmed to persons at Rome called publicans, who entered into contracts to pay fixed sums

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, b. xii. c. 60.

² Strabo, Div. I. 60.

³ 'Suis legibus et judiciis usæ, ἀὐτονομίαν ἀεπτὰ, revixerunt.'—*Ep. ad Attic.* vi. 2.

to the State, and repaid themselves by the taxes collected by their agents in the provinces. These publicani farmed the tolls and taxes, and were usually of the equestrian class, because it obviously was necessary that they should be persons of wealth. The word *equites* is therefore often used as synonymous with *publicani*—their rank being not unlike that which we denote vaguely by the English word ‘capitalist.’ The letting of taxes appears to have taken place in the month of March, and was conducted by public auction; the highest bidder becoming contractor for a *lustrum*, or period of five years.¹

The publicani, who farmed various branches of the public revenue, constituted separate societies, over each of which a chairman (*manceps*) presided. They managed their business with their provincial agents by correspondence. Cicero speaks of letters brought daily from Asia to the publicani at Rome, dealing with affairs of the greatest magnitude concerning the revenue.² To them the heads of towns and districts were required to furnish proper particulars for the correct assessment of property and families.

The assessment or registration (*professio*) included a numerical statement of the freemen and slaves, the women and children, and cattle of every description, houses and buildings, the acreage of every farm, and the amount of land under tillage.³ In the dependencies the method of registration was probably similar to that adopted at Rome itself, where the census was taken in the Campus Martius; the citizens being summoned to appear before the Censors, each tribe being called up separately, and each paterfamilias being required to give an account, on oath, of his family, himself, and his property.⁴

In the time of Cæsar Augustus there was a general survey of the empire. Josephus has a long account of this survey, so far as it related to Syria and Judæa. He says:—

¹ Smith's *Dict. of Antiquities*, ‘Censor.’

² *Oratio pro Lege Manilia*, ii.

³ Merivale, *Hist. of the Romans*, c. 39.

⁴ Smith's *Dict. of Antiquities*, ‘Censor.’

Now Cyrenius, a Roman senator, and one who had gone through other magistracies, and had passed through them till he had been consul, and one who on other accounts was of great dignity, came at this time into Syria with a few others, being sent by Cæsar to be judge of that nation and to take an account of their substance. Coponius also, a man of the equestrian order, was sent together with him to have supreme power over the Jews. Moreover, Cyrenius came himself into Judæa, which was now added to the province of Syria, to take an account of their substance.¹

This account substantially agrees with that given by S. Luke, which is as follows :—

Now it came to pass in those days there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to enrol themselves, every one to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to enrol himself.²

Some shallow critics cavil at this statement. Why, they ask, should Joseph go up to Bethlehem to enrol himself? Why should he not do this at his own home? The reason is given by S. Luke himself, 'because he was of the house and family of David;' and Bethlehem was the 'city of David,' and in that place the genealogy of the family was preserved.

The method of taking the census was not unlike that above mentioned of taking the census at Rome, that is, the heads of families were summoned to some convenient place to give an account of themselves and their property. As there were not post-offices nor facilities for printing census papers, this was the only practicable method. A similar process was adopted in compiling our own Domesday-book. The sheriffs and other officers of all the counties met at convenient places within them, together with some of the inhabitants of each village, and upon their information compiled that great survey of England in the eleventh century.

¹ *Antiquities*, b. xviii. c. 1.

² Luke ii. 1. The Greek word for enrolment is ἀπογραφή, a list of taxable property.

The survey of which the assessment in Judæa was part extended to the whole empire. There had been partial surveys of provinces before, but this was the first which was so extensive. Besides that great work, and probably as a supplement to it, Augustus caused maps of his vast dominions to be prepared. Reference has already been made to a document written by his own hand, which was solemnly read to the Senate immediately after his decease. In that document—for which the great survey must have furnished copious materials—he gave an account of the revenues of the State, the number of citizens and allies, the number of troops, ships, kingdoms, provinces, and tributes, and the public expenditure.¹ It was a monument of his industry, as well as his desire for the well-being of the empire. He gave it the name of *Breviarium*, or abridgment. It was a ledger of his household; and his household was half the human race.

The very common use of the Greek language throughout the Roman empire had a material influence on the progress of Christianity. Far and wide Greek was spoken, and thus the apostles had a ready means of communication with the various colonies.

The Greeks had preceded the Romans in the work of colonisation. More than three centuries before the Christian era Alexander the Great had founded colonies in many regions, partly for military purposes, partly to promote commerce and civilisation. Alexandria, the famous capital of Egypt, was built by him. Here was the celebrated library said to have consisted of 700,000 volumes; and Alexandria was renowned as a centre of science and philosophy. All along the shores of the Mediterranean are scattered famous cities, whose names betoken their Greek origin. Naples is the modern name of Neapolis, a Greek colony. Marseilles is the ancient Massilia, and Nice the ancient Nikaia. Sicily was colonised by Greeks, and a large part of Italy was called Magna Græcia. The people of Rhodes and Phocis seem to have had settlements on the east coast of Spain. Emporium, now Ampurias, in Catalonia, was one of those settlements.

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, b. i. c. 11.

At Rome in the Augustan era, and long previously,¹ Greek was the language of polite society. Cicero tells us that he accustomed himself to speak Greek with the same readiness as Latin, and recommends the practice to others.¹ Horace, in a familiar passage, advises his friends to study Greek authors night and day :

*Vos exemplaria Græca
Nocturnâ versate manu versate diurnâ.*²

But the use of this language was not confined to the upper classes at Rome. Any visitor to the Catacombs and Columbaria sees at a glance at the inscription that Greek was familiar to a large part of the poorer population.

Our own Shakespeare, with his unfailing accuracy, describes in a few words the extent to which Greek was a familiar language at Rome.

Cassius. Did Cicero say anything?

Casca. Ay, he spoke Greek.

Cassius. To what effect?

Casca. Nay, an I tell you that, I'll ne'er look you i' the face again : but those that understood him smiled at one another, and shook their heads ; but for my own part, it was Greek to me.³

Josephus, in the preface to his 'Wars of the Jews,' says he composed that work originally in his native language for the sake of his countrymen, the Jews, and translated it into Greek, 'for the sake of such as live under the government of Rome.' Doubtless, for the same reason, the Gospel of S. Matthew, written originally in Hebrew, was translated into Greek. It must be remembered that not only the canonical books of the New Testament, but also the most important Christian works of the first and second century, such as the works of Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius, and Justin Martyr, were written in that language.

The prevalence of Greek at Jerusalem is signified by the inscription on the cross, written by Pilate's direction in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Besides the Hebrews, or home-

¹ 'Semper cum Græcis Latina conjunxi, neque id in philosophiâ solum sed in dicendi exercitatione feci.'—*De Officiis*, lib. i. c. 1.

² *Ad Pisones*, v. 268.

³ *Julius Casar*, act i. sc. 2.

born Jews, who spoke the Aramaic dialect of Hebrew,¹ there was at Jerusalem a large population of foreign Jews, who spoke Greek, the social language of the Roman empire. These are called in the 'Authorised' translation of the Acts of the Apostles 'Grecians,' and in the 'Revised' version, 'Grecian Jews.'²

The important influence which the general use of the Greek language exercised upon the teaching of Christianity is not sufficiently estimated. On the memorable occasion of the tumult against Paul at Jerusalem, he was asked by the chief captain, 'Dost thou know Greek?' Unless he had known that language his ministrations would have been confined to the Hebrews. As it was, he was able to preach to the whole civilised world.

¹ After the Babylonish captivity, the Babylonian Aramaean language supplanted the Hebrew and became the common language of Judæa. Even so early as the reign of Hezekiah, some seven centuries before the Christian era, the Babylonish dialect was understood by Jews of high rank. When the King of Assyria sent Rab-shakeh with a great host and a hostile message to Jerusalem, Eliakim, to whom the message was delivered, said to him, 'Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall' (2 Kings xviii. 26).

² 'Now in those days, when the number of disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews' (Acts vi. 1). The word in the original for a Greek Jew is Ἑλληνιστής, a Hellenist. The true Greeks are Ἕλληνες, Hellenes.

CHAPTER II.

THE JEWS BEFORE THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

IN the Old Testament the history of the Jews closes with the narratives of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The nature of our subject requires some notice of the subsequent history of the Jewish race, and of their settlements throughout the Roman empire.

Ezra and Nehemiah describe the conclusion of the Babylonish captivity. Cyrus, in the first year of his reign, gave free permission to the Jewish exiles to return to their own land, and multitudes, who had yearned with inexpressible longing for their release, availed themselves of that offer. By the rivers of Babylon they had sat down and wept when they remembered Zion; and when the glad tidings of their release reached them—

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them.¹

But the exiles did not all avail themselves of the proclamation. During the long years² of their captivity many of them had become permanently settled in Babylonia, and had married women of that country. With that remarkable facility of adopting new domiciles which has characterised the Jewish people in all ages, they had become peaceful, industrious citizens in their new homes, and, like their ancestors in Egypt, found favour in the sight of the people

¹ Psalm cxvi.

² The capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xxiv.) occurred about B.C. 599; the proclamation of Cyrus about B.C. 536.

among whom they were settled, and some of them, like Nehemiah himself, held important public offices in Persia.

It is not necessary, for our purpose, to trace continuously the history of the Jewish people, as the main object of the present chapter is to explain their connection with the Roman empire. The manner in which that connection commenced is narrated in the first Book of Maccabees—a work of great historical value, and deeply interesting to Christians, for it records one of the most important epochs of Jewish history. But in modern times it is usually banished from our English Bible.¹

The Maccabees were a Jewish family celebrated for their heroic resistance to the Syrians, who repeatedly invaded Judæa during the second century before the Christian era. Judas Maccabæus, the most celebrated of the family, became commander of the Jewish army about B.C. 166, and for six years maintained an unequal contest with the invaders, whose forces were far superior in numbers to his own. In order to strengthen his position he entered into an alliance with the Romans. The terms of this remarkable treaty are thus stated in the first Book of Maccabees:—

This is the copy of the epistle which the Senate wrote back again in tables of brass and sent to Jerusalem that there they might have by them a memorial of peace and confederacy.

Good success be to the Romans and to the people of the Jews by sea and by land for ever. The sword also and the enemy be far from them.

If there come first any war upon the Romans or any of their confederates throughout all their dominions,

The people of the Jews shall help them as the time shall be appointed with all their heart.

Neither shall they give anything unto them that make war upon them, or aid them with victuals, weapons, money, or ships as it hath seemed good unto the Romans, but they shall keep their covenant without taking anything therefor.

In the same manner also, if war come first on the nation

¹ The first hearers of Handel's beautiful oratorio *Judas Maccabæus* were familiar with the exploits of the great Jewish patriot. The practice of mutilating the English Bible had not commenced in Handel's time.

of the Jews, the Romans shall help them with all their heart, according as the time shall be appointed them.

Neither shall victuals be given to them that take part against them, or weapons, or money, or ships, as it hath seemed good to the Romans; but they shall keep their covenants, and that without deceit.

According to which articles did the Romans make a covenant with the people of the Jews.

The substance of this treaty is also given by Josephus,¹ who states that 'the people bestowed the high priesthood on Judas.' But there is not any mention of this circumstance in the first Book of Maccabees.

Judas fell fighting against the Syrians (B.C. 160) before he received any assistance from his new allies.

The treaty is of great historical interest, being the commencement of the connection between the Jews and the Romans. It was renewed about thirty years afterwards, by a decree of the Roman Senate, when Hyrcanus was high priest and chief ruler of the Jews.² The death of this Hyrcanus (B.C. 106) marks an important epoch of Jewish history; for with him ceased the theocracy, as it has been called—a form of government not unlike that which subsisted in the Papal dominions until the Pope lost his temporal power. The high priest was chief governor of the people until the death of Hyrcanus, after which time this system ceased.

When their father Hyrcanus was dead, the eldest son, Aristobulus, intending to change the government into a kingdom—for so he resolved to do—first of all put a diadem upon his own head 481 years and 3 months after the people had been delivered from the Babylonish captivity and were returned to their own country again. . . . He cast his mother into prison because she disputed the government with him; for Hyrcanus had left her to be mistress of all. He also proceeded to that degree of barbarity as to kill her in prison with hunger.³

The next signal incident of the process of Roman subjugation of the Jews occurred about thirty years later, when two

¹ *Antiquities*, b. xii. c. 10.

² *Ib.* b. xiii. c. 9.

³ *Ib.* b. xiii. c. 11.

brothers—another Hyrcanus and another Aristobulus—contended for the regal authority (B.C. 70). These rival princes sent ambassadors to Pompey to advocate their claims. Pompey was at the time in the neighbouring country of Syria. He directed Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, as well as the representatives of the Jewish people, to attend him at Damascus, and argue their causes before him.

And there it was that he heard the causes of the Jews and of their governors, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, who were at difference one with another, as also of the nation against them both, which did not desire to be under kingly government; because the form of government they received from their forefathers was that of subjection to the priests of that God whom they worshipped.¹

Pompey, after hearing their complaints, told the parties 'that when he came again into their country he would settle all their affairs.' The partisans of Aristobulus shut the gates of Jerusalem against Pompey, who thereupon besieged the city (B.C. 63), and after three months' siege took it on the Sabbath day, which the Jews would not violate by offensive warfare. The fortifications were thrown down by battering rams, the enemy poured in apace, and twelve thousand Jews were slain.

And no small enormities were committed about the temple itself, which in former ages had been inaccessible and seen of none. For Pompey went into it, and not a few of those that were with him, and saw all that which was unlawful for any other men to see but only for the high priests. There were in that temple the golden table, the holy candlestick and the pouring vessels, and a great quantity of spices; and besides these there were among the treasures 2,000 talents of sacred money. Yet did Pompey not touch anything of all this on account of his regard to religion.²

And now for the first time the Jewish nation became subject to Rome. Pompey restored the high priesthood to Hyrcanus.

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xiv. c. 3.

² *Ib.* b. xiv. c. 4. The statement that Pompey took nothing from the temple is confirmed by Cicero in his oration for Flaccus.

canus, imposed a tribute on the Jews, and took from them some neighbouring cities which they had acquired by conquest.

Now the occasions of this misery which came upon Jerusalem were Hyrcanus and Aristobulus by raising a sedition one against the other. For now we lost our liberty and became subject to the Romans, and were deprived of that country which we had gained by our arms from the Syrians, and were compelled to restore it to the Syrians. Moreover, the Romans exacted of us in a little time above 10,000 talents; and the royal authority, which was a dignity formerly bestowed on those that were high priests by the right of their family, became the property of private men.¹

Subsequent rulers of the Jews were variously styled procurators, tetrarchs, and kings. But whatever were their titles they were appointed by Roman authority, and the Jews continued subject and tributary to Rome.

By far the most important of these appointments, with reference to the history of Christianity, was that of Herod, misnamed the Great.

Rome, after the defeat and death of Pompey, was ruled by a triumvirate (B.C. 60), of which the most celebrated members were Julius Cæsar and Marc Antony. Subsequently to the assassination of Julius Cæsar in the Senate house another triumvirate was constituted (B.C. 43), which included Antony and Octavius, better known by his subsequent title Augustus.

About that time Herod was virtually governor of Jerusalem, though Hyrcanus was the nominal ruler. Herod had already distinguished himself by his cruelty, and when Antony was in Asia² some of the principal Jews were deputed to make their complaints against Herod. He, however, bribed Antony with money, and was appointed by him tetrarch of Judæa.

Herod was subsequently promoted by the Senate, through the influence of Antony and Cæsar (Augustus), to be king of the Jews. The circumstances of Herod's visit to Rome and his appointment are graphically narrated by Josephus.³

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xiv. c. 4.

² Shortly after B.C. 42, which is the date of the battle of Philippi.

³ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xiv. cc. 12 and 13.

A Senate was convoked, and Messala first and then Atratinus introduced Herod into it, and enlarged upon the benefits they had received from his father, and put them in mind of the good-will he had borne to the Romans. . . . And Antony informed them farther that it was for their advantage in the Parthian war that Herod should be king. This seemed good to all the senators, so they made a decree accordingly. . . . But when the Senate was dissolved, Antony and Cæsar went out of the Senate house with Herod between them, and with the consuls and other magistrates before them, in order to offer up sacrifices and to lay up their decrees in the Capitol. Antony also feasted Herod the first day of his reign; and thus did this man receive the kingdom, having obtained it in the 184th Olympiad.¹

The man whom Antony, Augustus, and the Roman Senate thus honoured was a monster of cruelty. He married a woman renowned for her beauty, Mariamne, and, after she had borne him several children, caused her to be put to death. As soon as she was dead his passion for her—outrageous before—increased in intensity.

His love to Mariamne seemed to seize him in such a peculiar manner, as looked like divine vengeance upon him for taking away her life. He would frequently call for her and frequently lament for her in the wildest manner. Moreover, he bethought him of everything he could make use of to divert his mind from thinking of her, and contrived feasts and assemblies for that purpose. But nothing would suffice. He therefore laid aside the administration of public affairs, and was so far conquered by his passion that he would order his servants to call for Mariamne as if she were still alive and could still hear him.²

This story of frantic lamentation for the beautiful murdered wife suggests an explanation of the atrocities of Herod's reign. He must have been almost a madman. It would be impracticable to give a complete list of the murders which he authorised. He slew his wife's grandfather, and caused her

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xiv. c. 14. The 184th Olympiad began B.C. 45, and ended B.C. 41. Other authorities state that Herod was made king B.C. 40.

² *Ib.* b. xv. c. 7.

brother Aristobulus, a mere youth eighteen years old, to be drowned at Jericho while bathing. The story is a horrid one; but it is quoted here as an illustration of the character of the man who, at the birth of Christ, caused all the mothers in Bethlehem to weep for their children.

At first they were only spectators of Herod's servants and acquaintance while they were swimming; but after a while the young man, at the instigation of Herod, went into the water among them; while such of Herod's acquaintance as he had appointed to do it dipped him as he was swimming and plunged him under water in the dark of the evening as if it had been done in sport only; nor did they desist until he was entirely suffocated. And thus was Aristobulus murdered, having lived no more in all than eighteen years, and kept the priesthood one year only.¹

In his old age Herod accused his two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, of trying to murder him. He sent letters to Augustus formally accusing them of that crime. The Emperor, evidently aware of Herod's cruelty, tried to put some restraint on him, and in reply recommended that the sons should be tried before a judicial assembly, including the governors of Syria and the king of Cappadocia. Before this assembly Herod personally prosecuted his sons with the utmost vehemence and passion, and read letters from them in proof of his accusation. These letters, however, did not contain any confession of plots against him, but only of endeavours to fly from him. When the king had concluded the judges proceeded to give their decision.

In the first place, Saturninus, a person who had been consul and one of great dignity, pronounced his sentence, but with great moderation and trouble. He condemned Herod's sons, but did not think they should be put to death. He had sons of his own, and to put one's sons to death is a greater misfortune than any other that could befall him by their means. After him Saturninus's sons—for he had three sons that followed him, and were his legates, pronounced the same sentence as their father. On the contrary, Volumnius's sen-

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xv. c. 3.

tence was to inflict death on such as had been so impiously undutiful to their father; and the greatest part of the rest said the same, insomuch that the conclusion seemed to be that the young men were condemned to die. Immediately after this Herod came away from thence and took his sons to Tyre.¹

For a time the tyrant hesitated. His oldest friends urged him to adopt a lenient course, and told him that was the advice of his friends at Rome. A brave veteran soldier named Tero thrust himself into the king's presence, and passionately implored him to be merciful to his own children. 'Dost thou not perceive what thou art doing?' said the generous advocate. 'Wilt thou slay these two young men, born of the queen, who are accomplished with every virtue in the highest degree, and leave thyself destitute?' And he told Herod how the people and the whole army and officers commiserated the unhappy young men.

It was an act of heroism to rush thus into the mad tyrant's presence and openly brave his wrath. Josephus adds a pathetic circumstance that this Tero had a youthful son who was the intimate friend and companion of the Prince Alexander.

The rebuke was of little avail; indeed, did harm instead of good. For a short time Herod wavered, but at last he resolved on a deed of wholesale slaughter. Tero paid for his temerity by his life, and three hundred officers, who he had told the king sympathised with the young princes, were stoned to death. The end of the horrid story is this:—

Alexander and Aristobulus were brought to Sebaste by their father's command and there strangled. But their dead bodies were in the night time carried to Alexandrium, where their uncle by the mother's side and the greatest part of their ancestors had been buried.²

When he had slain his sons, Herod lamented for them as he had lamented for the murdered Mariamne. He brought up the two sons of Alexander and the three sons of Aristobulus. He was fond of exhibiting them to his friends as living proofs of his clemency and goodness. He gave them plenty of good

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xvi. c. 11.

² *Ib.* b. xvii. c. 1.

advice. 'Deploring the hard fortune of his own sons, he prayed that no such ill-fortune would befall these their children, but that they might improve in virtue and obtain what they justly deserved, and might make him amends for his care of their education.' Doubtless the children were highly edified by these pious admonitions of their grandfather, who had made them orphans.

About a year before the death of Herod occurred the massacre of infants in Bethlehem, of which there is a pathetic account in the Gospel of S. Matthew. Who does not remember the piteous story of 'Rachel weeping for her children; and she would not be comforted because they are not?' Another account given by Eusebius differs from it in some particulars. He says that Herod was greatly alarmed by the visit of the Eastern Magi and the prophecies of the birth of Christ:—

Having, therefore, inquired of the doctors of law in the nation where they expected that Christ should be born, and ascertained the prophecy of Micah announcing that it would be in Bethlehem, in a single edict he orders the male infants from two years old and below to be slain, both in Bethlehem and all its parts, according to the time that he had accurately ascertained from the Magi, thinking, at all events, as seemed very probable, that he would carry off Jesus also in the same destruction with those of his own age.¹

This account makes Herod act deliberately in the slaughter of the children. But the account in the New Testament, which seems more consistent with Herod's character, represents him as acting in a sudden fit of anger, 'When he saw that he was mocked² of the wise men he was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children.'³

Herod was now nearly seventy years of age. He had only another year to live, and it was passed in tortures, physical and mental. Josephus says that when he was near death he was so choleric that it brought him to do all things like a mad man. He commanded a large number of the principal inhabitants of Jerusalem to be shut up in the hippo-

¹ Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. i. c. 8.

² Literally, 'treated like a child;' ἐνεαίχθη.

³ Matthew ii. 16.

drome, and to be slain by his soldiers as soon as he was dead. His motive he explained to his sister Salome with brutal candour:—

I shall die in a little time, so great are my pains : which death ought to be cheerfully borne and welcomed by all men. But what principally troubles me is this, that I shall die without being lamented, and without such mourning as men usually expect at a king's death.¹

A little while after, as he lay on his deathbed, he tried to stab himself with a knife, but was prevented by his attendants. Josephus gives an account of the disease of which he died, much too disgusting to be repeated here. It is enough to say that he expired in horrible torture in his seventieth year, after a tyranny over the Jews of about thirty-five years. To him may well be applied the words which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Macbeth:—

I have lived long enough : my way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have ; but in their stead
Curses, not loud, but deep ; mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.

Herod at the time of his death had accumulated enormous wealth. By his will he bequeathed to his sister Salome 500,000 drachmæ of coined silver, besides vast landed estates. He made provision for the rest of his numerous kindred by giving them large sums of money and revenues. To Cæsar he bequeathed 10,000,000 drachmæ, besides vessels of gold and silver and garments exceedingly costly to Julia, the wife of Cæsar. And to other legatees he gave 5,000,000 drachmæ. Reckoning silver at 5s. an ounce, the gift to Cæsar was equivalent to about 325,000*l.* of our money ; but that is a very inadequate representation of the value of the bequest, for the purchasing power of money was far greater than it is now.

The magnitude of the wealth and estates of Herod had become a proverb and household word even at Rome. Thus

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xvii. c. 6.

Horace describes a man indifferent to wealth who preferred ease, and pleasure, and perfumes to the rich palm groves of Herod:—

*Cessare et ludere et ungi
Praeferat Herodis palmetis pinguibus.*¹

These palm groves were in the country round Jericho, and were some of the most valuable possessions of the Jewish monarch.

What, however, is more important historically, is the disposition of his kingdom which Herod made, or endeavoured to make, by his will. Subject to the approval of Augustus, he proposed this arrangement—that his son Archelaus should succeed him as king of Judæa, that his son Antipas should be tetrarch of Galilee, and his son Philip tetrarch of Gaulonitis.

It will be interesting to consider the effect of this will, for all the three names just mentioned are connected with the history of the events recorded in the New Testament. Archelaus—as S. Matthew states, ‘did reign in Judæa in the room of his father Herod.’² Antipas is that ‘Herod the tetrarch’ who, at a later date, married his brother Philip’s wife.³ S. Luke also describes him as ‘tetrarch of Galilee,’ and his brother Philip as ‘tetrarch of Ituræa and Trachonitis.’⁴

It was mentioned that this partition of Herod’s dominions was proposed, subject to the approval of Augustus Cæsar. Archelaus disputed the validity of the will, for he had expected to be appointed successor to the kingdom of Judæa. He alleged that the testator was not of sound mind when the will was made, and that an earlier will ought to prevail.

Both parties appeared in person and with their advocates before Cæsar Augustus at Rome. The forensic arguments are given at length by Josephus, and strongly resemble those of counsel in our Probate Court in a suit to determine the

¹ Horace, *Epistles*, b. ii. ep. 2, v. 184. ² Matthew ii. 22. ³ *Ib.* xiv.

⁴ Luke iii. 1. Tetrarchy is a word derived from two Greek words meaning *four* and *rule*; and was used by the Greeks originally to signify one of the divisions of a country divided into four parts. But subsequently the word was used to denote any division of a country without reference to the number four. We have an example of the original meaning of the word in the division of Thessaly into four tetrarchies, which was revived by Philip.

validity of a will. Antipater, 'a very subtle orator,' spoke first. He accused Archelaus of usurpation and tyranny, and concluded thus :—

His father never so much as dreamed of making him his successor in the kingdom when he was of sound mind, because he knew his disposition. In his former and more authentic testament he appointed his antagonist Antipas to succeed. But Archelaus was called to that dignity when he was in a dying condition, both of body and mind, while Antipas was called when he was ripest in his judgment, and of such strength of body as made him capable of managing his own affairs.

The advocate for Archelaus replied. His speech was principally an *argumentum ad hominem*, and skilfully appealed to the Emperor's vanity.

Cæsar will not disannul the testament of a man whom he had entirely supported—his friend and confederate—and that which is committed to him in trust to ratify. Nor will Cæsar's virtuous and upright disposition, which is known and untested throughout the habitable world, imitate the wickedness of these men in condemning a king as a madman, and as having lost his reason while he hath bequeathed the succession to a good son of his, and one who flies to Cæsar for refuge.¹

Augustus, at the conclusion of these speeches, spoke a few cautious words to Archelaus, told him vaguely that he would act for his benefit, but postponed his decision.

There was another party to be heard—not an unimportant one—and that was the Jewish people themselves. They were weary of the Herods, as well they might be, and wanted to be quit of them altogether.

The complaints of the Jews were heard at Rome with solemnity, dignity, and admirable fairness.

In order to explain the following passage it may be mentioned that pending Cæsar's decision, Varus, the governor of Syria, temporarily kept order at Jerusalem.

An embassy of the Jews was come to Rome, Varus having permitted the nation to send it, that they might petition for liberty of living by their own laws. Now the number of

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xvii. c. 9.

the ambassadors that were sent by the authority of the nation was fifty, to which they joined above 8,000 of the Jews that were at Rome already. Hereupon Cæsar assembled his friends and the chief men among the Romans in the temple of Apollo, which he had built at a vast charge. Thither came the ambassadors, and a multitude of the Jews that were there already came with them, as did also Archelaus and his friends.¹

The Temple of Apollo, where these proceedings took place, was on the Palatine Hill. It was built of Carrara marble by Augustus, and was surrounded by marble columns. To it were attached spacious halls, which contained a celebrated library, and between the pillars stood numerous statues.²

Upon the liberty that was given to the Jewish ambassadors to speak, they who hoped to obtain a dissolution of kingly government betook themselves to accuse Herod of his iniquities. . . . The main thing they desired was this, that they might be delivered from kingly and like forms of government, and might be added to Syria, and be put under the authority of such presidents as should be sent to them. It would thereby be made evident whether they be really a seditious people and generally fond of innovation, or whether they could live in an orderly manner, if they had governors of any sort of moderation set over them.³

This appeal to Cæsar is a remarkable proof of confidence in Roman justice. The Jews were content to be ruled by a Roman prefect; but could not endure the Herodian oppression. Their solicitations were partially successful. Cæsar 'appointed Archelaus to be, not indeed king of the whole country, but ethnarch of one-half of that which had been subject to Herod; and promised to give him the royal dignity hereafter if he governed that part virtuously.' In other words, Augustus

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xvii. c. ii.

² Ramsay, *Roman Antiquities*, c. 1. The Palatine Hill is on the south side of the Forum Romanum. On this hill Augustus built his palace, the *Domus Augustana*. Succeeding Emperors built other edifices near it, until the hill was entirely covered by imperial buildings, of which the vast ruins, well known to visitors to Rome, now bear the name Palazzi de Cæsari. Among the most conspicuous of these ruins is the Basilica, or court of justice—erected probably on the site of the hall in which Augustus heard the appeal mentioned in the text.

³ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xviii. c. 12.

determined to give him a trial. The other half of the late Herod's dominions was divided into two tetrarchies. That of Perea and Galilee was given to Herod Antipas, and the tetrarchy of Trachonitis to his brother Philip.¹

The experiment of making Archelaus a ruler was altogether unsuccessful. Josephus² informs us that he used not only the Jews but also the Samaritans barbarously. Whereupon they both sent ambassadors against him to Cæsar, and in the ninth year of his government he was banished to Vienna (now Vienne) in Gaul, and his wealth was confiscated.

Augustus had warned this wicked son of a wicked father that he held office on probation, that misuse of his power would be disastrous to himself. The warning was disregarded; and Cæsar kept his word.

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xvii. c. 11. *Wars of the Jews*, b. ii. c. 6.

² *Ib.* b. ii. c. 7.

CHAPTER III.

JUDÆA UNDER ROMAN GOVERNORS.

SHORTLY after the Christian era Judæa became a Roman province. We have now to consider some of the principal events in the history of the Jews under Roman governors.

It will here be necessary to advert to one of the driest of topics—chronology. The history of primitive Christianity is closely connected with that of the Jews and Romans, and it would be impossible to give a clear idea of the sequence of events without dates.

Throughout Christendom it is the practice now to fix dates by reference to the birth of Christ; but for several centuries after the commencement of the Christian era this method of dating events was not adopted. It is supposed to have been first practised by a Roman monk named Dionysius the Little, about the year 527. Before that time Christians followed the Roman usage, and reckoned years either by reference to the date assumed for the foundation of the city of Rome, or to the names of the successive consuls.

It is now well ascertained that the Dionysius just mentioned fixed the date of the Nativity about four years too late. We have this puzzling result that Christ was born B.C. 4. This way, in which the true date has been determined, is remarkable. Josephus, referring to certain events which occurred during the last illness of Herod, says, 'And that very night there was an eclipse of the moon.'¹ This eclipse, which is of the greatest importance for the determination of the date of the Nativity, is shown by the rules of astronomy to have happened on March 13, in the fourth year before the Christian era.² The Gospel of S. Matthew makes it plain

¹ *Antiquities*, b. xvii. c. 6.

² See note in Whiston's translation of Josephus, *loc. cit.*

that Christ was born about three months before the death of Herod. Hence the date of the Nativity is at the end of the year B.C. 5, or at the beginning of the year B.C. 4.

Conspicuous events, such as eclipses, are frequently recorded by historians, and furnish infallible means of recovering dates, for the orbits of the sun and moon are traced by astronomers with unerring accuracy; and thus the heavens become a mighty dial on which the progress of time is noted, not only by days or hours, but also by centuries and thousands of years.

It will be convenient to give here a short table of the dates of some events noticed in this and the preceding chapter:

- B.C. 63, Pompey besieged Jerusalem.
- B.C. 44, Julius Cæsar killed.
- B.C. 39, Herod appointed King of the Jews.
- B.C. 23, Augustus became Emperor.
- B.C. 4, The Nativity.
- A.D. 7, Judæa made a Roman province.
- A.D. 14, Tiberius became Emperor.
- A.D. 29, The Crucifixion.
- A.D. 37, Caius (Caligula) became Emperor.
- A.D. 41, Claudius (Tiberius Claudius Nero), Emperor.
- A.D. 54, Nero, Emperor.
- A.D. 68, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, rival Emperors.
- A.D. 69, Vespasian, Emperor.
- A.D. 70, Overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus.

After the siege of Jerusalem by Pompey, Judæa became subject to Rome, but was not finally made a Roman province until the reign of Augustus.¹ After the death of Herod and the banishment of his son Archelaus, of which an account has been given in the preceding chapter, Judæa was ruled by procurators, who were subordinate to the governors of Syria. The first of these procurators was Coponius (A.D. 7).² Excepting one short interval, this system continued until

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xiv. c. 4; b. xviii. c. 1.

² *Ib.* b. xviii. c. 2, enumerates four such procurators—Coponius (A.D. 7), Annianus Rufus, Valerius Gratus (A.D. 15), Pontius Pilate (A.D. 26).

the overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus. For a long time after their loss of independence the Jews were governed without severity, and they appear to have acquiesced without much resentment in their subjection to Rome. The memorable cry, 'We have no king but Cæsar,' seems to have represented accurately the popular feeling. That cry was uttered in the reign of Tiberius. His predecessor, Augustus, had not only not persecuted the Jews, but had studied to propitiate them. Of this feeling of good-will towards them there are some very remarkable instances recorded on the unexceptionable authority of Philo Judæus. The Emperor Augustus was accustomed to give monthly gifts of corn to the poor. If the day for this distribution fell on a Sabbath the portion assigned to the Jews was reserved to the following day, in order that they might participate in the imperial bounty. This Emperor also made magnificent offerings to the temple at Jerusalem, and, what is still more remarkable, ordered burnt-offerings to be offered daily for him to 'the Most High God.' Of course the Jews would not allow Gentiles to offer on their altars Mosaic sacrifices; but they allowed Gentiles to offer sacrifices by the hands of Jewish priests. Philo states that this practice of sacrificing on behalf of the Roman Emperors and at their expense was continued during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius and Caligula, and adds, 'and will be performed for ever as a proof and specimen of a truly imperial disposition.'¹

We do not hear of any complaints of the Jews against their Roman rulers until the time of Pilate. He offended the strongest religious feelings of the Jews by carrying into the temple ensigns or shields on which the image of the Emperor was displayed.² But afterwards he removed the

¹ Philo Judæus, *De Legat.* c. 23. This remarkable statement is confirmed by Tertullian, for referring to Judæa, he says, 'Whose God you Romans once honoured with victims and its temple with gifts and its people with treaties.' — *Apology*, c. 26.

² These ensigns were objects of worship. Tacitus calls them *propria legionum numina*, and Tertullian in his 'Apology' (c. xvi.) says the entire religion of the Roman camp consisted in swearing by the ensigns, and in preferring the ensigns to all the gods.

obnoxious symbols.¹ During the same period Herod Antipas held the tetrarchy of Galilee, to which he had been appointed in the manner mentioned in the last chapter. S. Luke informs us that during the trial of Christ, 'when Pilate heard of Galilee he asked whether the man was a Galilæan. And as soon as he knew that He belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.'²

The evangelist adds that 'the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity with each other.' It has been conjectured by learned writers that this enmity had arisen from Pilate having caused to be slain certain Galilæans during a tumult, which is described by Josephus, and which was provoked by Pilate applying the Corban or sacred money to the expenses of an aqueduct. The persons so slain are supposed to be 'the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices,' that is, had shed at one of the great festivals.³ This is a reasonable explanation of the enmity between Herod and Pilate. The Roman governor had intermeddled with the tetrarch's jurisdiction by slaying his subjects.

Pilate was governor at Jerusalem ten years, and was recalled (A.D. 36) about seven years after the Crucifixion. The occasion of his recall has been noticed in the last chapter. He had put down some riots among the Samaritans with extreme severity. When this tumult was appeased the Samaritan Senate sent an embassy to Vitellius, Governor of Syria, and accused Pilate of the murder of those that were killed. Vitellius ordered Pilate to go to Rome to answer this accusation before the Emperor.

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xviii. c. 13, s. 1, says that Pilate did this in deference to the feelings of the Jews. But Philo Judæus gives a different version of the transaction. He says that 'those who were in power in our nation' (possibly the Sanhedrim) wrote a supplicatory letter to the Emperor Tiberius, and that Tiberius instantly wrote to Pilate, sharply reprimanding him, and ordering him to take down these ensigns and remove them to the temple of Augustus at Cæsarea. Philo, *De Legat.* c. 38.

² Luke xxiii. 6.

³ Luke xiii. i.

⁴ Cf. Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xviii. c. 3, and note *ib.* in Whiston's translation. Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, b. ii. c. 9.

After the recall of Pilate, Vitellius, the Governor of Syria, went up to Jerusalem, where he was magnificently received by the inhabitants. He made great efforts to propitiate them, and relieved them from some taxes.¹

These transactions occurred just before the death of the Emperor Tiberius. His successor was a young man of very different disposition, Caius, who had received from the soldiers the affectionate nickname Caligula, or Little Sandal, when as a child he was playing about in the camp of his father Germanicus, and was treated as a general favourite with the troops. The *caliga* was a kind of shoe or sandal studded with nails, and worn by the common soldiers. Caligula, a diminutive of the word, was the camp name of the young prince.

Tiberius, with all his moroseness in the later years of his life, had been tolerant to the Jews. The new Emperor Caius or Caligula drove them to desperation by offending their deepest religious convictions. His policy towards them was diametrically opposed to that of preceding Emperors. From Julius Cæsar's time the rule had been to respect their faith and usages. Pilate, as was said, had vainly tried to bring into the temple the ensigns which were the gods of the Roman army. Caius contemplated an equally dire offence. He wanted to have his statue erected in the temple. All other subjects of the Roman empire, says Josephus,² built altars and temples to him, and received him as a god, except the Jews, who thought it a dishonourable thing to erect statues in honour of him or to swear by his name. Accordingly he ordered Vitellius to invade Judæa with troops, and to compel the people to erect his statue in the temple. The Jews answered by passive stubbornness. They petitioned Petronius, who succeeded as Governor of Syria, not to compel them to transgress the law of their forefathers.

If, said they, thou art entirely resolved to bring this statue and erect it, do thou first kill us and then do what thou hast

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xviii. c. 5.

² *Ib.* b. xviii. c. 8.

resolved upon. For, while we are alive we cannot permit such things as are forbidden us to be done, by the authority of our lawgiver.¹

The Governor replied that if he were Emperor he should comply with their request, but being sent by Cæsar he must compel obedience to his decrees. He said to them, 'Will you then make war with Cæsar without considering his great preparations for war, and your own weakness?' They replied, 'We will not by any means make war with him; but still we will die before we see our laws transgressed.'

In this emergency the Jews obtained help in an unexpected manner. Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod 'the Great,' was at Rome, and was in great favour with the Emperor. This is the Herod mentioned by S. Luke as stretching forth his hand 'to vex certain of the Church.'² Notwithstanding the unfavourable character given to him in the Acts of the Apostles, it appears that he was capable of generous actions towards his own countrymen. While at Rome he entertained the Emperor at a banquet with more than imperial magnificence.

So Caius, when he had drunk wine plentifully and was merrier than ordinary, said thus during the feast when Agrippa had drunk to him, 'I knew before now how great a respect thou hast for me, and how great kindness thou hast shown to me. . . . Everything that may contribute to thy happiness shall be at thy service, and that cheerfully, so far as my ability will reach.' And this was what Caius said to Agrippa, thinking he would ask for some large country or revenues of certain cities. . . . Agrippa replied, 'Since thou, O my lord, declarest such is thy readiness to grant that I am worthy of thy gifts. I will ask nothing relating to my own felicity. . . . My petition is this, that thou wilt no longer think of the dedication of that statue which thou hast ordered to be set up in the Jewish temple by Petronius.' And thus did Agrippa venture to cast the die upon this occasion, so great was the affair in his opinion and in reality, though he knew how dangerous a thing

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xviii. c. 7.

² Acts xii. 1. He was the father of that Agrippa before whom S. Paul pleaded.

it was so to speak. For had not Caius approved of it, it had tended to no less than the loss of his life.¹

However, the bold petition was granted, and Caius wrote to Petronius that if the statue was not already erected, he was not to proceed with the matter, but to dismiss the troops.²

The Herod Agrippa here mentioned had previously received a large part of his grandfather's dominions. He did not, however, become king of Judæa until the reign of the next Emperor, Claudius³ (A.D. 41). Agrippa died three years afterwards. The manner of his death is narrated in the Acts of the Apostles⁴:—

Upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

It will be interesting to compare this account with that of Josephus. After stating that Agrippa instituted a festival at Cæsarea in honour of Cæsar, he proceeds:—

On the second day of which shows he put on a garment made wholly of silver and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theatre early in the morning. At which time the silver of his garments being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surpassing manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked thereon.

And presently his flatterers cried out one from one place, and another from another—though not for his good—that he was a god. And they added, 'Be thou merciful to us, for although we have hitherto revered thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature.'

Upon this the king did neither rebuke them nor reject their impious flattery.

But as he presently afterwards looked up, he saw an owl sitting on a rope over his head, and immediately understood

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xviii. c. 8.

² *Ib.* b. xviii. c. 5.

³ Josephus, *ib.*

⁴ Acts xii. 21-23.

that the bird was a messenger of ill tidings to him ; and he fell into the deepest sorrow. A severe pain also arose in his body, and began in a most violent manner.

He therefore looked upon his friends and said, 'I whom you call a god am commanded presently to depart this life ; while Providence thus reproves the lying words you just now said to me.' . . . And when he had been quite worn out by the pain in his belly for five days, he departed this life, being in the fifty-fourth year of his age.¹

Thus perished miserably the last king of the Jews.

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xix. c. 8.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TEMPLE, THE SYNAGOGUE, AND THE SANHEDRIM.

THE horrible death of Herod Agrippa, narrated in the last chapter, took place in the third year of the reign of the Emperor Claudius (A.D. 44). Thenceforward, until the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, Judæa was governed by Roman procurators. The first of them was Cuspius Fadus,¹ who appeared to have ruled temperately. An incident of his government illustrates the toleration of the Jewish religion by the Emperors. Fadus had required the high priests to deposit their sacred vestments in the custody of the Romans, as had been the usage.² They strongly objected, and he gave them leave to send ambassadors to Rome to petition the Emperor that the vestments might remain in their own keeping. On hearing their petition Claudius granted it immediately. He wrote a letter, addressed to 'the magistrates, senate, and people, and the whole nation of the Jews,' in which he says, 'I have complied with your desire, in the first place out of regard to that piety which I profess, and because I would have everyone worship God according to the laws of their own country.'³

This was indeed the general principle on which the

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xix. c. 9; *Wars*, b. ii. c. 11.

² The usage in the time of Pilate is described by Josephus (*Antiquities*, b. xv. c. 11) as follows: The vestments 'were kept under the seal of the high priest and of the treasurers of the temple: which treasurers, the day before a festival, went up to the Roman captain of the temple-guards, and viewed their own seal and received the vestments; and again, when the festival was over, they brought them to the same place, and showed the captain of the temple-guards their seal, which corresponded with his seal, and repositied them there.'

³ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xx. c. 1.

Romans governed their provinces. Submission to authority was sternly exacted, but they did not interfere in matters of religion. This policy is expressed in the language of Pilate, when the Jews wanted him to condemn Christ to death, 'I find no fault in Him.' And when at last the Roman governor gave way to the importunity of Christ's enemies, he tried to shift the responsibility of his death to them. The whole tenor of the narrative of the crucifixion shows that on the principles of Roman law it was utterly illegal. We have similar illustrations of those principles in the judgment of Agrippa and Festus concerning S. Paul, 'This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds;' ¹ and in the conduct of Gallio, when he refused to listen to the accusations against S. Paul, saying, 'If they are questions about words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; I am not minded to be a judge of these matters.' ²

The Jews, then, had full liberty to worship as they please. Their magnificent temple was almost entirely rebuilt by Herod, who appears to have undertaken this great work from a desire to propitiate the Jews, whom he had incensed by his tyranny.

The Jews regarded the temple with extreme veneration. Temple-worship occupied a large part of their daily life, and we cannot fully understand their social condition without some knowledge of the mighty edifice which was the great centre of their imposing ritual. Josephus has given an elaborate account of the temple, and some of the more important passages of his description will be read with interest. He tells us that when Herod first announced to the Jews his intention to enlarge the structure which had been erected after the Babylonish captivity the announcement was received with distrust. The people feared that he would demolish the old building and not proceed with the new. To allay these fears he promised that he would not pull down the existing temple until all the preparations were made for the new work.

And as he promised them this beforehand, so he did not break his word with them, but got ready a thousand waggons

¹ Acts xxvi. 31.

² Acts xviii. 15.

that were to bring stones for the building, and chose out ten thousand of the most skilful workmen, and bought a thousand sacerdotal garments for the priests, and had some of them taught the arts of stonecutters, and others of carpenters, and then began to build. . . .¹

The temple was built of stones that were white and strong. The length of each was twenty-five cubits; their height was eight, and their breadth twelve.² The temple had doors also at the entrance, and lintels over them of the same height with the temple itself. They were adorned with embroidered veils with their flowers of purple and pillars interwoven. And over these, but under the crown work, was spread out a golden vine with its branches hanging down from a great height, the largeness and fine workmanship of which was a surprising sight to the spectators; to see what vast materials there were and with what great skill the workmanship was done.

He also encompassed the entire temple with very large cloisters, contriving them to be in a due proportion thereto; and he laid out larger sums of money upon them than had been done before him, till it seemed that no one else had so greatly adorned the temple as he had done.

There was a large wall to both the cloisters; which wall was itself the most prodigious work that was ever heard of by man. The hill was a rocky ascent, that declined by degrees toward the east parts of the city, till it came to an elevated level. This hill it was that Solomon, who was the first of our kings, by divine revelation encompassed with a wall. . . .

The city lay over against the temple in the manner of a theatre, and was encompassed by a deep valley along the entire south quarter; but the fourth front of the temple, which was southward, had indeed itself gates in its middle, as also it had the royal cloisters with three walks, which reached in length from the east valley unto that on the west, for it was impossible it should reach any further. And this cloister deserves to be mentioned better than any other under the sun. For while

¹ According to Josephus, Herod began the building in the eighteenth year of his reign, and the battle of Actium (B.C. 31) was fought in the seventh year of the same reign (*Antiquities*, b. xv. c. 5); consequently, the temple was commenced B.C. 20.

² There are frequent errors of arithmetic in the works of Josephus, due probably to mistakes of transcribers. There must be a mistake here, for according to the dimensions here stated, as a cubit is 21 inches, the stones would be of the incredible size, 47 feet x 14 feet x 21 feet.

the valley was very deep, and its bottom could not be seen, if you looked from above into the depth, this vastly high elevation of the cloisters stood upon that height, insomuch that if anyone looked down from the top of the battlements, or down both those altitudes, he would be giddy, while his sight could not reach such an immense depth.

This cloister had pillars that stood in four rows one over against the other all along. The fourth row was interwoven into the wall, which also was built of stone; and the thickness of each pillar was such that three men might, with their arms extended, fathom it round, and join their hands again; while its length was twenty-seven feet, with a double spiral at its basis. The number of all the pillars in that court was one hundred and sixty-two. Their capitals were made with sculptures after the Corinthian order, and caused an amazement to the spectators, by reason of the grandeur of the whole. . . .

This was the first enclosure; in the midst of which, and not far from it, was the second, to be gone up to by a few steps. This was encompassed by a stone wall for a partition, with an inscription which forbade any foreigner to go in under pain of death.

Now this inner enclosure had on its southern and northern quarters three gates equally distant from one another. But on the east quarter, towards the sun rising, there was one large gate through which such as were clean came in, together with their wives, but the temple further inward in that gate was not allowed to the women. But still more inward was there a third court of the temple, whereinto it was not lawful for any but priests alone to enter.

The temple itself was within this; and before that temple was the altar upon which we offer our sacrifices and burnt offerings to God.¹

It appears from another passage in Josephus that the daily sacrifice on this altar was continued without interruption from the rebuilding by Herod until the siege by Titus about seventy years afterwards.²

We now turn to the consideration of another important

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xv. c. 11.

² *Wars*, b. vi. c. 2.

religious institution—the Synagogue. It is supposed that synagogues originated during the Babylonish captivity. Being debarred from temple-worship the Jews assembled on Sabbaths to hear portions of the law expounded. After the return from the Captivity the obligation of reading the law and of keeping up a knowledge of religion among those who lived too far from Jerusalem to attend the temple, rendered it necessary to provide other places of meeting. The time when synagogues became general is not known with certainty, but the Greek form of the word suggests that they were not common until after the reign of Alexander the Great. The Greek word (*συναγωγή*) simply means an assembly or place of assembly. Before the Christian era there were synagogues of the Jews throughout the civilised world in the various cities in which they settled.

There were fundamental distinctions between the worship of the temple and the synagogue. In the latter there were neither altars; priests, nor sacrifices. The ministry was drawn from any tribe, and was quite distinct from the Levitical priesthood. Every Sabbath day or oftener the people met—the men on one side, and the women on the other; the elders of the congregation being on seats at the end of the chamber facing the people. These elders (presbyters or pastors) formed a sort of college or chapter, varying in number, and one of them conducted the worship. He was called *Sheliach*, delegate or spokesman, and is several times styled in the English New Testament as ‘ruler of the synagogue.’¹

At a congregation at least ten men must be present; if there were not so many there could not be any reading of the Law and the Prophets, and the Benedictions could not be pronounced.

The furniture of the building included an ark or chest containing a copy of the Law and the Prophets, and a pulpit. It was the duty of the minister of the congregation to take the roll of the Law from the ark and hand it to the reader, and when the reading was finished to return it to its place. He

¹ *E.g.* Jairus is called so (*ἄρχων τῆς συναγωγῆς*), Luke viii. 41. Another instance is that of Crispus, Acts xviii. 8.

called on each person who was appointed by the ruler of the synagogue to ascend the pulpit and read, and stood beside him to see that he did not make mistakes. The ruler of the synagogue appointed the persons who were to read and recite the Benedictions.

Every synagogue had two chambers, one called the House of the Book, in which the Scriptures were read, and the other the House of Doctrine, in which tradition was taught and expounded. Synagogues were originally built in fields apart from other houses. In later times the best sites in cities and villages were chosen. They were built east and west, and this practice was followed in the erection of Christian Churches subsequently. It seems certain that the synagogue furnished the pattern for the organisation of Christian Churches. The extent to which the Christian liturgies, ritual, and Church arrangements were borrowed from the examples of the synagogue will be considered hereafter. For the present it is sufficient to refer to the sanction which Christ and the apostles gave to the worship of the synagogue. They attended the synagogues of Galilee Sabbath after Sabbath, and after the crucifixion we find the practice continued by the apostles.

The officers of the synagogue were not permitted to act until they had been duly appointed and ordained. The candidate was ordained by the Sanhedrim laying their hands on his head with the words, 'Rabbi, behold thou art ordained.' Particular persons were set apart for distinct duties, one to expound the law, another to act as judge, and so on. In no case was a person recognised as a teacher or judge until he had received authority publicly.

There were numerous synagogues in Jerusalem. The Rabbis, with their usual exaggeration, said there were 480 of them. The duty of resorting to them was strictly enjoined. If ten men of full age were present public prayers were recited on the Sabbath and other days of meeting, as well as on the festivals. The minister called up a member of the congregation in order to recite the Shemoneh Esreh, or Eighteen Benedictions, and the Shema, or 'Hear,' commencing 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.' The recitation of

the Shema followed the prayers, and after it came the reading of the Law and Prophets. Generally, all Jewish men were liable to be called on to read. After reading the Benediction some additional prayers were recited, and then the congregation separated, but occasionally a discourse might be delivered before they dispersed.

In considering the state of Jerusalem in the time of the apostles we must not fail to notice the judicial system of the Sanhedrim—a very important subject, with reference to the early history of Christianity.

The word Sanhedrim is a Hebrew corruption of the Greek word synedrion (*συνέδριον*), which means a sitting together or council.

These councils were of three kinds. That of the highest class was the supreme court of the nation—the Great Sanhedrim—which sat only at Jerusalem, and consisted of seventy-one members. The Sanhedrim of the second class consisted of twenty-three members, and was established in various cities of sufficient population. The tribunals of the third class consisted of three members only.

Of these three kinds of tribunals the lowest in rank and authority was a tribunal of the first instance, which had jurisdiction in civil and criminal causes of minor importance, such as charges of petty robberies and thefts and small claims for debts. When all the evidence had been received the judges consulted and the president gave judgment in presence of the plaintiff and defendant. But each member of the court was strictly prohibited from divulging for which party he gave his voice. From the tribunal of three there lay an appeal to the next higher in rank—the tribunal of twenty-three.

The tribunals of the second class were Sanhedrim, or councils of twenty-three. They were established in various cities, in which the population was sufficiently numerous. According to the Mosaic institution there were to be judges in all cities.

Judges and officers thou shalt have in all thy gates which

the Lord thy God giveth thee throughout thy tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment.¹

According to Josephus the number of these judges in each city was originally seven.² But in later times the number was increased to twenty-three in the more important places. Vacancies in this number were supplied from three classes of probationers, who succeeded by seniority to the judicial offices.

The local Sanhedrim had both civil and criminal jurisdiction, and in some cases a power of inflicting capital punishment. But these sentences were not final, until confirmed by the supreme court—the Great Sanhedrim, which sat at Jerusalem. There was a general power of appeal to that tribunal. This right of appeal was in accordance with the Mosaic law.

If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates; then shalt thou arise and get thee to the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, and thou shalt come to the priests and Levites and unto the judge that shall be in those days and inquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment.³

Josephus, in his exposition of the Mosaic law, says that difficult causes were to be sent to the 'holy city,' to be determined by 'the high priest, the prophet, and the Sanhedrim.'⁴

The supreme council of the nation—the Great Sanhedrim—consisted of seventy-one or seventy-two members. Its origin is a matter of controversy. Some writers have considered it to be a continuation of the Council of Seventy appointed to assist Moses in the government of Israel.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto Me seventy men of the elders of Israel whom thou knowest, to be elders of the people and officers over them.⁵

Other writers, however, suppose that this was merely a temporary arrangement, as there is no mention of a similar

¹ Deut. xvi. 18.

² *Antiquities*, b. iv. c. 8.

³ Deut. xvii. 8.

⁴ *Antiquities*, b. iv. c. 8.

⁵ Numbers xi. 16.

council existing after the time of Moses. The Greek origin of the name suggests that this institution was established or remodelled in the time of the Maccabees. But it is manifest that the Jews could not have been governed without some judicial institutions; and whether we regard the Sanhedrim as a continuation of the Mosaic assembly or merely analogous to it is a question of no practical importance. That older institution furnished a precedent for the later, and that there was a resemblance between them cannot be doubted.

The highest office of the Sanhedrim was the president, under the title of Nasi or Prince. This office was usually held by the high priest. Next to him in rank was a vice-president, called the Father of the House of Judgment. The general place of assembly was a chamber in the precincts of the temple, called Gazith. But about forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem—that is, about the time of the crucifixion—the Sanhedrim removed to Khanoth, or shops in the outer court.¹

The functions of the Great Sanhedrim were political as well as judicial. A foreign war could not be commenced without the sanction of the supreme court, nor could the army be set in motion without its authority. This was while the Jews retained their independence of kings and Roman governors. But long after Judæa became tributary to Rome the Sanhedrim continued to possess considerable authority in the general government of the country. Thus Josephus states that in the reign of Nero, when Gessius Florus was procurator of Judæa (A.D. 65), the people of Galilee were in a state of revolt against the Roman authority, and Josephus himself was commissioned by the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem to go to Galilee and endeavour to persuade the inhabitants to lay down their arms.² He adds that as soon as he reached Galilee he wrote to the Sanhedrim and asked for directions, and was directed to remain there and assume the superintendence of that country. In pursuance of the authority thus given to him Josephus had the cities fortified and appointed judges.³ And after he had

¹ Milman, *History of the Jews*, b. xviii.

² *Life of Josephus*, ss. 7 and 12.

³ *Ib.* s. 14.

been thus appointed Governor of Galilee, he assembled a local Sanhedrim at Tiberias, the capital of that country, and consulted them respecting political affairs.¹

As another instance, we may cite the proceedings in the Sanhedrim nearly about the same time when the Levites petitioned King Agrippa for leave to wear sacerdotal garments. This was during an interval between the dismissal of one Roman governor and the arrival of his successor. During this interregnum King Agrippa seems to have exercised temporary authority at Jerusalem.

As many of the Levites, which is a tribe of ours, as were singers of hymns, persuaded the king to assemble a Sanhedrim, and to give them leave to wear linen garments, as well as the priests. . . . The king, with the suffrages of those who came into the Sanhedrim, granted the singers of hymns this privilege, that they might lay aside their former garments and wear such a linen one as they desired; and as a part of this tribe ministered in the temple, he permitted them also to learn those hymns they besought him for.²

The Sanhedrim was indeed a Senate. It resembled our own House of Lords in this one respect, that it had both political and judicial power.

It is not easy to understand how the great power of the Sanhedrim was consistent with the sovereignty of Rome. Possibly the relations of the Jewish Senate to the Roman procurators was something like that of the legislative assemblies of some of the English colonies to the governors appointed by the Crown. For instance, the Parliaments of Canada and Australia make laws, but they are subject to the veto of the governors. It may be that the Sanhedrim exercised authority under similar conditions. This is only a conjecture, but it seems the only one which will explain the mode in which the continued authority of the Sanhedrim was compatible with the Roman Government. We know that after Judæa became a province it was not lawful for the Sanhedrim to assemble without the consent of the procurator. We have a signal

¹ *Life of Josephus*, s. 66.

² *Josephus, Antiquities*, b. xx. c. 9.

example of this rule in the condemnation of James, who is styled 'brother' of Christ. James was condemned to death—as will be more fully stated hereafter—by a Sanhedrim convened without the consent of the procurator; and for this illegal act the high priest was deprived of his office.¹

As the assembly possessed so great power it is interesting to know how it was constituted. The members belonged to three classes—priests, scribes, and elders; and there were twenty-four of each class. Wherever in the New Testament priests, scribes, and elders are mentioned together, the Sanhedrim is intended. For example, Christ was taken 'to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and elders were assembled.' Again, 'all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death.' It was the Sanhedrim which bribed Judas, and to them he brought back the thirty pieces of silver immediately before he hanged himself.² And it was before the same council that Stephen was brought for trial.³

In earlier times the Sanhedrim had undoubtedly the power of inflicting capital punishment; but this power was very rarely exercised. Indeed, it seems to have been generally a very merciful tribunal, and great precautions were taken against hasty sentences. It was only in cases like the condemnation of Christ and Stephen, where the deepest religious convictions of the Jews were offended, that the Sanhedrim disregarded its traditions of mercy.

A question often debated is whether this tribunal had lost in the time of Pontius Pilate the power of passing sentences of death. When Christ was taken before Pilate the Jews said, 'It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.'⁴ Hence it has been inferred that the Sanhedrim had lost the power of passing the extreme sentence. But if we look at the context it seems clear that this power had not entirely ceased, for Pilate went out to them, and proposed that they should

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xx. c. 9.

² Matthew xxvi. 57; xxvii. 1; xxvii. 3.

³ Acts vi. 15. In this place the Sanhedrim is expressly mentioned in the Greek, 'All that sat in the Sanhedrim saw his face as the face of an angel.'

⁴ John xviii. 31.

pass judgment according to their own law. Surely he would not have used such an expression if that law was no longer in force. The probable inference is that they could still, with the sanction of the Roman governor, pronounce capital sentence.

Many years previously—in the time of Julius Cæsar—the Roman Senate had passed decrees expressly reserving to the Jews the exercise of their own laws.¹ There is no reason for supposing those decrees were subsequently repealed. Josephus, who wrote long after the time in question, and has been careful to give copies of them, treats them as being in full force. Justin Martyr expressly states that the Jews persecuted the Christians to death as long as they could.²

But what renders it clear beyond doubt that the Sanhedrim retained its jurisdiction in capital cases, is the fact that the jurisdiction was exercised when Stephen was condemned to death. There is no sufficient ground for representing the proceedings in his case as irregular and tumultuous. On the contrary, they were perfectly regular. It is recorded³ that his enemies ‘seized him and brought him to the Sanhedrim, and set up false witnesses against him.’ Then when the witnesses had been heard, the prisoner was called upon to make his defence, which he did in a long speech. The votes of the judges were taken in the usual way; for S. Paul expressly says—referring to the prosecution of Stephen and his companions in suffering, ‘When they were put to death I set down a vote against them.’⁴ Again, the punishment was the proper one for the crime charged against Stephen; for the

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xiv. c. 10. Just about the time when those decrees were passed, Herod, then a very young man, was accused before the Sanhedrim of murder, and that court was about to pass sentence of death upon him, when, by the connivance of the high priest, he escaped from the city.—*Antiquities*, b. xiv. c. 9.

² *Dialogue with Trypho*, c. 16: ‘You have not the power to lay hands upon us, on account of those who have now the mastery; but as often as you could you did so.’ This was written in the second century.

³ Acts vi. 13.

⁴ *κατήνεγκα ψῆφον* (Acts xxvi. 11). The word *ψῆφον* here used is the technical name of the small stones used by the dicasts or jurymen at Athens in giving their verdicts. This passage shows clearly that S. Paul was at the

Mosaic law directed that those who were guilty of blasphemy or heresy should be stoned to death, and that the witnesses should be the first to cast stones, and then the rest of the people.¹ This is precisely what was done in Stephen's case; for we are told that the witnesses—who evidently took the most prominent part in the execution of the sentence—'laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.'² All the technical rules of the horrible procedure were duly observed.

The Sanhedrim, in this instance, exercised the ancient jurisdiction without any objection on the part of the Roman governors. Nor was this the sole instance. For S. Paul informs us that he had a commission from the Sanhedrim to go to Damascus, 'and to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.'³ Obviously this commission could not have been given if the authority of the Sanhedrim had been abrogated.

This authority was occasionally overruled by the Roman procurators, who sometimes interfered and remitted sentences. But that the ancient jurisdiction was retained even up to the time when Titus besieged Jerusalem is certain; for in his appeal to the Jews to lay down their arms he reminded them that they had been allowed to retain their own laws, and that so scrupulous had been the respect for their liberties, that they had power to put even a Roman citizen to death if he intruded into the sanctuary of the temple.⁴

The Sanhedrim consisted of three classes—priests, scribes, and elders. A few particulars respecting these classes may be here given.

Priests, by the Mosaic constitution, were of the lineage of Aaron. 'Take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.'⁵ In the time of

time a member of the Sanhedrim. Otherwise, he could not have been allowed to join in the voting.

¹ Deut. xiii. 6; xvii. 7.

² Acts vii. 58.

³ Acts xxii. 5.

⁴ Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, b. vi. cc. 2 and 4.

⁵ Exodus xxviii. 1.

David they had become numerous, and were divided into twenty-four courses, which successively performed the services of the temple.¹ Each course ministered for one week.

After the Babylonish captivity only four² of the twenty-four courses returned to Jerusalem, and these were again divided into twenty-four courses.

Priesthood was a mark of nobility among the Jews, and the twenty-four courses differed in social rank, the first course apparently being considered of the highest rank.³ In order to maintain their social dignity priests were forbidden to marry slaves, captives, and others of ignoble condition.

Some members of every course were continually resident in or near Jerusalem, that they might be ready for the service at the appointed time. The other members of each course were dispersed through the land. When the time of their course arrived these met together in their synagogues 'and fasted, and prayed, and read the law, and made supplications that their brethren's service, now in hand in Jerusalem, might be accepted.'⁴

The *Scribes*, or writers, constituted a learned profession. They transcribed and expounded the law, and it is supposed that they kept the genealogical registers. They seem also to have acted as notaries or writers of legal documents. Ezra speaks of himself as 'a ready scribe in the law of Moses.'⁵ The words 'lawyer' and 'doctor of the law' in the Authorised Version of the New Testament mean the same class of persons. In the Mosaic constitution they were required to be

¹ 1 Chron. xxiv.

² Ezra ii. 36-39, where the number of priests who returned to Jerusalem is stated to have been 4,289.

³ This appears from a curious passage in the *Life of Josephus*, in which he boasts of his ancestral dignity, 'The family from which I am derived is not an ignoble one, but hath descended all along from the priests. And as nobility among several people is of different origin, so with us to be of sacerdotal dignity is an indication of the splendour of a family. Now I am not only sprung from a sacerdotal family in general, but from the first of the twenty-four courses, and as among us there is not only a considerable difference between one family of each course and another, I am of the chief family of that first course also.' - *Life*, s. 1.

⁴ Dr. John Lightfoot, *Temple Service*, c. 6.

⁵ Ezra vii. 6.

appointed in every city; for in the text, 'Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates,'¹ the word translated 'officers' means scribes. They usually belonged to the class of priests or of Levites. They were accustomed to wear a distinctive dress—a long robe—and considered themselves persons of exalted rank. Christ described them as loving 'the chief places at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the market-place, and to be called of men, Rabbi.'²

At the time when the words were spoken these scribes were beginning to be a great power in the State. The word 'Rabbi' means master, in the sense of teacher, and the word Rabbinical is commonly given to the later Jewish writings. Rabbinism is that system of traditional interpretation 'which, supplanting the original religion of the Jews, became after the ruin of the temple and the extinction of public worship a new bond of national union, the great distinctive feature of modern Judaism.'³ Christ told the scribes that they made void the Word of God by their traditions.⁴ These glosses or interpretations were collected by the Rabbi Judah A.D. 200, and occupy an enormous space in the Talmud.

Elders.—This is the title given in the New Testament to all the members of the Sanhedrim who were not either chief priests or scribes.⁵ The elders apparently are the same as those whom Vitranga calls *synedri* or senators. He says that the chief Sanhedrim at Jerusalem supplied vacancies in its own body by electing members from the minor Sanhedrims, and also had the right of appointing the members of these local councils. It is not clear, however, that the chief Sanhedrim actually exercised this power throughout all

¹ Deut. xvi. 18.

² Matthew xxiii. 6.

³ Milman, *History of the Jews*, vol. iii. p. 100.

⁴ Matthew xv. 6.

⁵ The learned Lightfoot, in his *Exercitationes on the Acts of the Apostles* (iv. 6), says: 'I hardly believe anyone will doubt but that by "rulers, elders, and scribes," must be understood the Great Council; but to distinguish these particularly, I can hardly say whether it be more nice or more difficult. We might say that by "rulers" might be meant Gamaliel the president, and Simeon, his son, the vice-president; by the "elders" the rest of the body of the Sanhedrim; by the "scribes" either the two registrars or those wise men who judged before the Sanhedrim, or both. But I waive as being too curious.'

Canaan; and more probably, the local councils elected their own members, and the election certainly took place after consultation with the people in the synagogue.¹

Originally the government of the Jews was an aristocracy. Kingly government, though tolerated, was not expressly sanctioned by the Mosaic law.² When the Jews first asked to have a king, the prophet Samuel solemnly protested, and predicted that he would be an oppressor. 'But the people refused to hearken unto the voice of Samuel; and they said, "Nay, but we will have a king over us."'³ They had a kingly government for upwards of five hundred years. After the return from Babylon the form of government was 'aristocratical, but mixed with an oligarchy, for the high priests were at the head of affairs.'⁴ This continued until the Asmonean princes set up regal government again. Under the Roman rule, as we have seen, the Sanhedrim exercised great authority, and, consequently, until the fall of Jerusalem, the political constitution of Judæa was a native aristocracy, subject to the control of governors sent from Rome.

¹ *De Synagoga*, lib. iii. part i. c. 15.

² Deut. xvii. 14.

³ 1 Samuel viii. 19.

⁴ Josephus, *Antiq.* b. xi. c. 4.

CHAPTER V.

THE JEWS OF THE DISPERSION.

ONE of the most remarkable phenomena of ancient Jewish history is that known as the Dispersion.

Long before the commencement of the Christian era there were large settlements of the Jews throughout the Roman empire—that is to say, in every part of the civilised world. When this dispersion commenced it is impossible to determine. Six centuries before the Christian era Nebuchadnezzar carried many thousands of the Jews captive to Babylon.¹ Three centuries before the Christian era the troubled state of Judæa and the growing commerce of Alexandria induced many Jews to settle in Egypt voluntarily. Others were carried captive into that country after the siege of Jerusalem by Ptolemy I.² Antiochus the Greek (about a century later) settled large numbers of Jews in Phrygia.³ The result of these and similar emigrations, some compulsory and some voluntary, was that in the first century of Christianity every great city of the empire contained a considerable Jewish population.

To this dispersion of the Jews there are several references in the New Testament. At the feast of Pentecost recorded in the Acts of the Apostles the pilgrims included 'Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians.'⁴ The Epistle of S. James is addressed 'to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion,' and the First of S. Peter 'to the

¹ 2 Kings xxiv.

² *Ib.* c. 3.

³ Josephus, *Antiq.* b. xii. c. 1.

⁴ Acts ii. 9.

Elect which are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythinia.'¹

The foreign Jews flocked in vast numbers to Jerusalem at the great annual festivals, bringing with them the thoughts, habits, and languages which they had acquired in distant countries. There cannot be any doubt that these religious pilgrimages had an important influence on the home-bred Jews. The periodical immigrations into the holy city gave the inhabitants a knowledge of the outer world which they would not otherwise have possessed, and which in some degree must have tended to mitigate their fanatical adherence to their own creed and customs.

Besides this enlightening influence, another very important result followed from the dispersion of Jews in various widely separated regions. In consequence of the existence of Hebrew colonies in all the great cities of the Roman empire, the apostles in their missionary travels found at once congregations of their countrymen to whom they could address themselves. This facility of intercourse had a potent effect in promoting the rapid diffusion of Christian doctrine.

Josephus has preserved a large number of decrees addressed by the Roman Senate to the rulers of various provinces, respecting the Jews of the Dispersion. The general tenor of these decrees is the same—that the Jews are to be allowed complete toleration in the observance of their Sabbaths and religious rites. Among places to which these mandates are sent we find Sidon, Tyre, Askelon, Paros, Delos, Ephesus, Laodicea, and many others.² From other places in Josephus we learn that there were similar settlements at Antioch and Babylon. One of the most extensive Jewish colonies was at Alexandria, where a large part of the city belonged to them. The celebrated geographer Strabo, who wrote very early in the first century, says:—

These Jews are already gotten into all cities, and it is hard to find a place in the habitable earth that hath not admitted this tribe of men and is not possessed by them. It hath come

¹ James i. 1. 1 Peter i. 1. Both passages are incorrectly translated in the Authorised Version.

² *Antiquities*, b. xiv. c. 10.

to pass that Egypt and Cyrene, as having the same governors and a great number of other nations, imitate their way of living and maintain great bodies of these Jews in a peculiar manner, and grow up to greater prosperity with them and make use of the same laws with that nation also. Accordingly, the Jews have places assigned to them in Egypt wherein they inhabit, besides what is peculiarly allotted to this nation in Alexandria, which is a large part of that city. There is also an ethnarch allotted them, who governs the nation and distributes justice to them, and takes care of their contracts and of the laws to them belonging, as if he were the ruler of a free republic.¹

Thus Judæa, though comparatively a small state, was the centre of a vast religious community scattered throughout the civilised world. But wherever they went the Jews almost universally retained their faith, their synagogue worship, and their love for their mother country. At the three great feasts of the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, enormous multitudes were attracted to the holy city. When these solemnities were first instituted the commandment had been given, 'Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God.'² We know from the New Testament and from other sources, that in the time of the apostles vast numbers of 'devout men out of every nation under heaven,'³ were gathered together at Jerusalem. The countries from which this mighty host of pilgrims came extended from beyond the Euphrates in the east, to Rome in the far west and Arabia in the south.

Between these distant regions and the holy city lay stormy seas and trackless deserts. The faith which induced men to undergo the peril and toil of traversing these vast spaces by slow ships and caravans must have been very real and earnest.

There is a direction in the 'Mishna'⁴ which illustrates in a

¹ Quoted by Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xiv. c. 7. Of the most important of all the Jewish settlements—that of Rome—some account will be given in a subsequent chapter.

² Exodus xxiii. 17.

³ Acts ii. 5.

⁴ Treatise, 'Taanih.'

curious way the length and difficulties of these journeys. Prayers for rain were not to be said until fifteen days after the Feast of Tabernacles, in order that the latest Israelites might have reached the River Euphrates, on their return out of the Holy Land. That is to say, these prayers were not to be offered for rain which would hinder the pilgrims on their homeward journey.

Of the vast multitudes which attended these festivals, Josephus has statements which are almost incredible. He says that on one occasion (A.D. 65) there were in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover three millions of people.¹ In another place² he gives some very curious statistics relating to the numbers of persons present at the Passover. After stating that the total number who perished in the siege was 1,100,000, he proceeds:—

And that the city could contain so many people in it is manifest by that number of them which was taken by Cestius, who, being desirous of informing Nero of the power of the city, who otherwise was disposed to condemn the nation, entreated the high priests, upon the coming of their feast, which is called the Passover, when they slay their sacrifices from the ninth hour to the eleventh, so that a company of not less than ten belong to every sacrifice (for it is not lawful for them to feast singly by themselves, and many of us are twenty in a company), found the number of sacrifices was 256,500. This, upon the allowance of no more than ten that feast together, amounts to 2,700,200.

There is some error in the figures here: for if the number of sacrifices be taken at 256,500, and the number of persons to each sacrifice at ten, the total number partaking of the sacrifices would be 2,565,000. These figures cannot be received with absolute confidence, for in ancient manuscripts numbers were frequently denoted by numerical letters, instead of being written at length; and such letters, from resemblance to each other, are apt to be mistaken. However, the account shows that enormous crowds flocked to the sacred city. Of course they could not all have been lodged within its walls; a

¹ *Wars of the Jews*, b. ii. c. 11.

² *Ib.* b. vi. c. 9.

large part of them found accommodation in the adjacent villages during the festival.¹

The periodical collection of these vast crowds of worshippers exhibits vividly one of the most remarkable and most honourable features of the Jewish character—the constancy of the people to their religious faith. We see the same devotion exhibited in the liberality and regularity of the contributions to the treasury of the temple. The command had been given to them:—

They shall not appear before the Lord empty: every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which He hath given thee.²

And the precept was obeyed with a religious devotion to which the history of the world cannot furnish a parallel. Throughout the populous settlements of the Roman empire the contributions of the Jews to the sacred fund were raised with the utmost exactness and regularity. Josephus³ has preserved a number of decrees of the Roman Emperors, which show how extensively the system prevailed. For example, with reference to the Jews in Cyrene and Asia, the Emperor Augustus ordained that ‘their sacred money be not touched, but be sent to Jerusalem, and that it be committed to the care of their receivers at Jerusalem.’⁴ To Norbanus Flaccus, proconsul of Syria, the Emperor wrote, ‘Let those Jews, how many soever they be, who have been used according to their ancient customs to send their money to Jerusalem, do the same freely.’ A decree, addressed to the magistrates of Ephesus, confirms the right of the Jews ‘to offer those their first-fruits, which everyone of them offers to the Deity on

¹ Tacitus (*Hist.* v. 13) states the number of persons besieged in Jerusalem by Titus to have been 600,000, an estimate probably nearer the truth than that of Josephus.

² Deut. xvi. 15, 16.

³ Josephus, b. xvi. c. 6.

⁴ Philo Josephus, writing shortly before the destruction of the temple, says: ‘There is in almost every city a storehouse for the sacred things, to which it is customary for the people to come and there deposit their first-fruits, and at certain seasons there are sacred ambassadors selected, on account of their virtues, who convey the offerings to the temple. And the most eminent men in each tribe are elected to this office that they may conduct the hopes of each individual safe to their destination. For in the lawful offerings of the first-fruits are the hopes of the pious.’ On *Monarchy*, c. 3.

account of piety, and to carry them in a company together to Jerusalem.'

The Norbanus Flaccus here mentioned had prohibited the export of the Jewish tribute. He was afterwards put upon his trial at Rome, and Cicero was engaged for his defence. A curious passage in his oration for Flaccus shows how general was the system of contribution. He says that the Jews exported gold from Italy and all the provinces to Jerusalem, and that Flaccus had forbidden the export from Asia. Cicero contends that this act was laudable—that in his own consulship, the Senate had decreed that gold should not be sent out of the country, and that it was important to resist the 'barbarous superstition' of the Jews.¹

Of the enormous treasure collected in the temple we find several notices. When Pompey profanely entered the holy place he found there besides the golden table and vessels 2,000 talents,² of which, however, he did not take any part away. Another invader was less scrupulous. Crassus took away the 2,000 talents which Pompey had left untouched, and all the gold of the temple, to the enormous amount of eight thousand talents—probably not less than four millions sterling. Josephus, who is here our authority adds:—

And let no one wonder that there was so much wealth in our temple, since all the Jews throughout the habitable world, and those that worshipped God, even those of Asia and Europe, sent their contributions to it; and this from very ancient times.³

The Jews then were the most scattered of all nations, and yet in one sense the most united. They were not like other colonists and settlers who forget the land of their birth. T

¹ 'Cum aurum Judaorum nomine quotannis ex Italiâ et ex omnibus provinciis Hierosolymam exportari soleret Flaccus sanxit edicto ne ex Asiâ exportari liceret,' &c.—*Oratio pro Flacco*. The most important source of temple revenue was the didrachma, which every male Jewish adult had to pay. The payment of this sum by Christ is noticed, Matt. xvii. 24.

² The weight of a talent was more than that of 300 English sovereigns. Consequently, the quantity of gold in the temple when Pompey entered it exceeded that of 600,000 English pounds sterling, but the purchasing power of gold was far greater at that time than at present.

³ *Antiquities*, b. xiv. c. 4.

the pious Israelite, in whatever remote region he dwelt, Zion was still his mother. His love for her was kept alive by two of the strongest sentiments which can animate human nature—national pride and an intense religious faith. His race were the chosen people of God. To the Jews alone God had given His law, and that law was the very breath of their life. Hence the people among whom he dwelt had no part or share in the affections of the faithful Jew. However far from the sacred land his lot was cast, Judæa was still his country. With the Gentiles around him he had no sympathy; they were ever alien to him, and even while he talked and bartered with them the secret thought of his heart was:—

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her cunning.
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth
If I remember thee not;
If I prefer not Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM.

SUCH then was the general condition of the Jews at the commencement of the Christian era. In the history of the human race there is not any other example of a civilisation like theirs. They were dispersed yet united; subject yet free, citizens of the world and yet intensely patriotic. They stood alone among the nations, and yet mingled freely with them.

If we examine carefully and candidly the history of the Jews at the period in question, we must come to the conclusion that they were generally free from the horrid vices and common profligacy of the times. The Greek and Roman writers refer continually to a state of society among their own countrymen which was unutterably sensual and corrupt. But that the Jews were generally exempt¹ from this horrid depravity seems clear. Christ denounces their pride and the hypocrisy of their rulers, but never suggests that they were addicted to the grosser sins of the flesh. S. Paul gives a frightful picture of heathen vices, but he never attributes

¹ Intolerance and prejudice have frequently induced Christian writers to make most unfair and unjust accusations against the ancient Jews. For example, Horne's *Introduction to the Scriptures* (vol. iii. part iii. c. 6), speaks of the 'extreme corruption of the Jewish people, both in religion and morals, at the time of Christ's birth.' The authorities cited do not justify the conclusion that the Jews were immoral. The first text cited (Romans ii. 24) does not imply that Jewish morals were universally corrupt, but means this: that the Jews had set up so high a standard of morals that occasional immorality among them caused more scandal than it would among the Gentiles. The text next cited (Titus i. 16) does not refer to the Jews in particular, but generally to all who are 'defiled and unbelieving.' The passage cited from Josephus (*Wars*, b. v. c. 13) refers not to the Jews generally, but to a seditious and lawless faction which existed in the city during the siege by Titus, and this faction is charged, not with sensual depravity, but with sacrilege and robbery.

them to the Jews. Classical writers speak of them in terms of contempt--deride them as superstitious, rebellious, and covetous, but do not charge them with sensuality.

The strictness of the Jewish law with respect to legal uncleanness and subsequent purification must have had the effect of promoting personal decency and habits of self-respect and self-restraint. Some of the Rabbinical rules seem to us absurdly minute and rigid,¹ but they had this good in them--that they encouraged continence and purity. Speaking generally, we may safely say that the Hebrews were temperate and chaste. Their vices were allied to their virtues. They knew that they led purer lives than the surrounding nations; and this consciousness rendered them proud, fanatical, and intolerant, and any insult to their faith was fiercely resented.

It is to this last-mentioned characteristic of the Jews that we must attribute their bitter hostility to the earliest Christians. From the very beginning Christianity was persecuted; but its first enemies were the Jews, not the Romans. The secular governors were content to let the Christians alone. Rome did not concern herself with the various creeds of her provinces, and therefore the procurators of Judæa were absolutely indifferent about the new religion.

Not so the Jews. Their priests and scribes had been stung to madness by the tremendous denunciations of Christ: 'Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men.' . . . 'Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?' Such was the language addressed to the very rulers whom the people regarded with blind veneration. We may be sure that the terrible condemnation was not soon forgotten.

The Sanhedrim, having procured the death of Christ, set to work to counteract the teaching of His disciples. Justin Martyr states that, after the Crucifixion, the Jews sent out

¹ For example, contact with a reptile rendered the person touching it unclean; the *Mishna* refines on this rule, and directs that 'the egg of a creeping animal in which the young animal is already developed is clean; but when it has the smallest perforation, it renders it unclean.'--*Eighteen Treatises from the 'Mishna,'* translated by De Sola, p. 349.

persons to various countries to spread calumnies against the Christians.

After that you had crucified Him—the only blameless and righteous Man—you selected and sent out from Jerusalem chosen men throughout all the earth to announce that the godless heresy of the Christians had sprung up, and to publish those things which those who know us not speak against us.¹

The same writer² states that the Jews cursed in the synagogues those who believed in the name of Christ, and, as long as they had the power, persecuted the Christians. Probably, in speaking of the cursing in the synagogues, Justin Martyr refers to the prayer inserted in the morning prayer of the synagogue shortly after the Crucifixion. This prayer is the twelfth in the Shemoneh Esreh, or Eighteen Blessings, and is supposed by some to have been composed or sanctioned by Gamaliel, the instructor of S. Paul.³ Thus surrounded by fierce enemies the primitive church had a hard task before it.

The apostles had accepted a commission to preach Christianity to all nations. Let us consider now the first steps taken for the purpose.

The first constitutional act was to fill up the number of the Twelve, in which a vacancy had been caused by the fate of Judas. The mode in which the election to the vacancy took place seems to be very commonly misunderstood.

The successor ultimately appointed was Matthias, and the received opinion is that he was chosen by lot. A very learned writer—Mosheim—expresses the opinion that Matthias was chosen, not by lot but by vote; and, on a careful consideration of the circumstances, it is submitted that this opinion is correct.

The disciples were assembled to the number of about one hundred and twenty. In the 'authorised version' of the Acts of the Apostles, the appointment is thus described:—

¹ *Dialogue with Trypho*, c. 17.

² *Ib.* c. 16.

³ 'Let there be no hope to them who apostatise from the true religion; and let heretics, how many soever they may be, all perish in a moment. And let the kingdom of pride be rooted out and broken in our days. Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who destroyest the wicked and bringest down the proud.'

And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was unnam'd Justus, and Matthias.

And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two Thou hast chosen.

That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.¹

The main question is as to the meaning of the word here translated 'lot.' The Greek word is κλήρος (cleros), which does not necessarily imply the idea of chance. In fact it is used in this very chapter in a sense which obviously has nothing whatever to do with chance. In the verse translated, 'For he was numbered with us and had obtained part of this ministry,' the word 'part' is in Greek 'cleros.'² Here the context shows that word means appointment, without any reference to chance. Again, in a subsequent verse already quoted, we have the words, 'that he may take part of this ministry.' In the received Greek text the word for 'part' is 'cleros.'³ We may therefore safely say that the word does not necessarily involve the idea of chance.

But the argument does not stop here. 'Cleros' is constantly used in the New Testament and in classical authors in a sense altogether alien to any notion of fortune. It has the various meanings—allotment, inheritance, selection, and appointment. In ecclesiastical writers it is applied to the clergy as a selected class.

Again, the mode in which the 'lots' were given is altogether inconsistent with a notion that the choice between the two men selected by the apostles was left to chance. In the Authorised Version the words are, 'They gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias.' Who gave forth the lots? Was

¹ Acts i. 23-26.

² τὸν κλήρον τῆς διακονίας ταύτης, ver. 17.

³ In the text on which the Revised Version is founded, the word τόπον is in this place substituted for the word κλήρον. Even if we accept this alteration the argument is not materially affected; for there is at all events one passage (if not two) in which beyond doubt the word κλήρος does not imply chance.

it the apostles or the one hundred and twenty disciples? The phrase literally translated may mean either 'they gave their lots,' or 'they gave lots to them.'¹ If we adopt the latter reading the passage means that the apostles distributed the 'lots' to the disciples.² If we adopt the former reading the sense is that the disciples gave their 'lots.'

But either way the *giving* of 'lots' is inconsistent with an appeal to chance. Had that been the course adopted the phrase would have been not that they *gave* lots, but that they *cast* lots; just as it is in all the Gospel narratives of the incident of *casting*³ lots by the soldiers at the Crucifixion.

The apostles had selected two candidates. If one of them was to be selected by something like the process of a lottery, clearly only two 'lots' would have been necessary. This part of the subject may be illustrated by reference to a well-known and very beautiful passage in the 'Iliad.' The story, as told by Homer, is this: The Greeks had determined to select a champion to contend with Hector in single combat. Nine of the princes compete for this honour; each of them marks his own lot; the nine lots so marked are thrown into a helmet; the helmet is shaken, and the lot of Ajax leaps out.⁴

Here the number of lots is, of course, the same as the number of candidates. But there is no suggestion that in the selection of Matthias there were only two lots. On the contrary, the narrative is quite inconsistent with that supposition. It is submitted the following translation of the passage under consideration is substantially correct:—'And they gave their votes; and the vote fell upon Matthias, and he was finally voted⁵ among the eleven apostles.'

¹ ἔδωκαν κλήρους αὐτοῖς or αὐτῶν.

² This is the view of one of the most eminent theologians of our own age, Dr. Lightfoot (*Philippians*, p. 246). Dr. Lightfoot refers to instances (Clem. Alex. Quis dives salv. 42, and Iren. iii. 3, 3) where κληροῦν, the verb derived from κληρος, means 'to appoint to the ministry.'

³ Thus in Mark xv. 24, 'they parted His garments, casting (βάλλοντες) lots upon them.'

⁴ *Iliad* vii. 160.

⁵ The word translated 'elected,' is the compound συγκατεψηφίσθη. In composition, κατὰ often means completeness or finality, and that seems the sense here. The verb undoubtedly implies voting. The opinion here expressed is

The elucidation of this celebrated passage in the history of the infant church is important, with reference to the polity and organisation of that church at the very commencement. If the view here suggested be correct, the apostles and whole body of disciples acted together as a corporate society, in which the apostles had the chief authority and the disciples a limited right of suffrage.

That S. James, the kinsman of Christ, presided over this community seems clear beyond reasonable doubt. The matter is indeed one of controversy, but so is every matter which directly or indirectly relates to primitive church government.

Ancient writers frequently refer to the episcopacy of S. James. For instance, Eusebius says¹:—

This James, therefore, whom the ancients, on account of the excellency of his virtues, surnamed the Just, was the first that received the episcopate of the Church at Jerusalem. But Clement, in the sixth book of his 'Institutions,' represents it thus: Peter and James and John, after the ascension of our Saviour, though they had been preferred by our Lord, did not contend for the honour, but chose James the Just as Bishop of Jerusalem.

In this passage the use of the phrase 'after the ascension' seems to show that James was thus chosen when the Church at Jerusalem was first constituted, or very soon afterwards.

In another place² Eusebius says:—

Hegesippus also, who flourished nearest the days of the apostles, in the fifth book of his 'Commentaries' gives the most accurate account of him, thus: 'But James, the brother of the Lord, who, as there were many of that name, was surnamed the Just by all, from the days of our Lord until now, received the government of the Church with the apostles.'

offered with much diffidence, for though the authority of Mosheim may be quoted in favour of it, many eminent authorities may be quoted against it. One frequent argument against giving κληρος the meaning here contended for is that the expression, 'the lot fell' (ἐπεσεν ὁ κληρος), shows that the lot literally fell. But the verb πίπτω has many meanings besides that of literally falling.

¹ *Ecclesiastical History*, b. ii. c. 1.

² *Ib.* b. ii. c. 23.

Hegesippus—here quoted by Eusebius—flourished about A.D. 170, and therefore could not have been an eye-witness of the facts which he relates. But he lived so near the time of the apostles that it is not credible that he could have misstated a matter of common notoriety. He says that S. James ‘received the government of the Church with the apostles,’ evidently implying that the Church was governed by the apostles under his presidency. This statement was made about one hundred years after the death of S. James; that is, in the lifetime of men whose fathers and grandfathers had been his contemporaries. It is very unlikely that in such an interval of time an error as to the name of the first bishop at Jerusalem could have crept in.¹

This S. James is called, in the New Testament, the Lord’s brother, and is also styled S. James the Less. With respect to his parentage there is much diversity of opinion. Dr. Döllinger says he was the son of Clopas, and that his mother was the sister of the mother of Jesus, and that the cousins were reckoned as brothers, according to the more extended use of the word among the Jews.²

The references to S. James in the New Testament show that he presided over the Church there. In the council³ at Jerusalem, held to determine whether Gentile proselytes should be circumcised, after a long debate S. Peter addressed the assembly. Then followed speeches by Paul and Barnabas; ‘and after they had held their peace, James answered and said, Men and brethren hearken unto me.’ That is to say, having listened to all the arguments, he proceeds to sum up the debate and give the result. He adopts the form, ‘wherefore I adjudge.’⁴ Probably the words mean that he pronounces authoritatively what he understands to be the general opinion of the council.

¹ There are other traditional statements as to the episcopacy of S. James. Eusebius says (*History*, b. vii. c. 19) that the very chair in which he sat was preserved to his own day. In the *Ancient Syriac Documents*, p. 33, S. James is spoken of as ruler of the Church at Jerusalem.

² *First Age of Christianity*, b. i. c. 3.

³ Acts xv. 6.

⁴ *ὁ δὲ ἐγὼ κρίνω*. Neither the Authorised nor the Revised Version translates these words literally.

On another occasion, S. Paul says that 'James and Cephas and John' gave him the right hand of fellowship.¹ The order of names is significant. It is highly improbable that S. James would have been mentioned first unless he were the Primate. Shortly afterwards S. Paul says that 'when Cephas came to Antioch I resisted him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back, and separated himself from them that were of the circumcision.'²

Whether the occurrence here mentioned was before or after the Council of Jerusalem has been a matter of dispute;³ but this is clear, that S. James sent a mission from Jerusalem to the city, at which SS. Peter and Paul were staying; that from deference to the authority of these commissioners S. Peter altered his line of conduct, and that, further, he had to submit to a severe rebuke. Circumstances more inconsistent with the theory that he was superior in rank to SS. James and Paul can hardly be imagined.

When S. Peter had been thrown into prison by Herod Agrippa, and was liberated, we are told that he went to a place where many of the disciples were assembled, and informed them of his deliverance from prison, adding, 'Go, show these things unto James and to the brethren.'⁴ James especially was to be informed. The reasonable inference is that he was first in importance.

Again, on the subsequent occasion of a visit of S. Paul to Jerusalem with disciples from Cæsarea, 'Paul went with us unto James, and all the elders were present.'⁵ The most natural interpretation of the passage is that S. Paul introduced these disciples to a general synod of the Jerusalem presbyters, and that S. James presided over the assembly.

¹ Galatians ii. 9.

² Galatians ii. 11, 12.

³ A full account of this controversy is given in the *Life of S. Paul*, by Conybeare and Howson, vol. i. Appendix I., where the learned authors incline to the opinion that the visit mentioned in the Galatians is identical with that of Acts xv.

⁴ Acts xii. 17.

⁵ Acts xxi. 18. The date of this visit probably was A.D. 58; and the date of the previous council at Jerusalem A.D. 50.—Norris, *Key to the Acts of the Apostles*, Appendix.

Dr. Döllinger¹ is of opinion that S. Peter held pre-eminence among the apostles. He says:—

S. Paul did not enter on his peculiar office of preaching to the Gentiles till after his fifteen days' conference with S. Peter. While the apostles remained united at Jerusalem the primacy of S. Peter displayed itself on all grave occasions. It was he who arranged the filling up of the apostolic college through S. Matthias' election. He fixed the form of election, confining it to those who had been companions of Christ and witnesses of His acts. He takes up the word before the people and the Sanhedrim, and works the first miracle for confirming Christ's resurrection. The punishment of Ananias and Sapphira, the anathema on Simon Magus, the first heretic, the first visiting and confirming the churches suffering under persecution, were all his acts. If he was sent with S. John by the apostolic college to the new converts at Samaria, he was himself member and president of that college.

Any opinion of so eminent a writer as Dr. Döllinger deserves respectful consideration. But if we examine the arguments here quoted, one by one, we shall find them all inconclusive. The incidents to which he refers show no more than this—that S. Peter was extremely active and energetic and forward to speak. It is not stated in the Acts of the Apostles that he arranged the filling up of the apostolic college by the election of S. Matthias, but merely that he spoke in favour of that proceeding. The two candidates were chosen by the apostles collectively, not by him singly. So, with regard to the rest of the statement on which Dr. Döllinger relies, we find that not one of them implies any pre-eminence of S. Peter. So far is this from being the case that S. Paul addresses to him a severe rebuke. The language in which it is couched is not deferential; it does not recognise any superiority. S. Paul evidently regards his own authority as equal to that of S. Peter.

The Church at Jerusalem over which S. James presided exercised supervision and authority over neighbouring churches. This is abundantly clear from the history of the council just mentioned. A controversy arose at Antioch as to the exemption of the Gentiles from circumcision. The disciples of that

¹ *First Age of Christianity*, b. iii. c. 1.

city determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain other of them should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.¹ The Church at Jerusalem gave its decision, which was addressed to the brethren 'which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia.'² Some writers represent this epistle from the Church at Jerusalem as merely a piece of advice and not a decree. But it is distinctly called a decree in the Acts of the Apostles:—

And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.³

The words are plain and express. The letters of the apostles contained, not advice which might or might not be followed, but decrees which were to be kept or observed.

This decree must have sorely affected the prejudices of some of the Jewish converts. They had been taught before they embraced Christianity that Gentiles converted to Judaism could not enjoy the full privileges of the Jewish religion unless they were circumcised. So accustomed were the Jews to regard the rite as essential to communion with them that many, after they adopted the Christian religion, considered that Gentiles converted to Christianity should be circumcised. The decree of the Council at Jerusalem abolished this principle of exclusion.

On an earlier and somewhat similar occasion the same council had declared in favour of toleration. Philip the deacon had preached with such effect in Samaria that many of the inhabitants were converted and baptised. 'When the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John.'⁴ The new church was thus recognised and confirmed by the direct authority of the apostles acting together as a corporate body.

This act must have given another severe shock to the feelings of many of the Jewish disciples. The Jews had no

¹ Acts xv. 2.

² *Ib.* ver. 23.

³ Acts xvii. 4, τὰ δόγματα τὰ κεκριμένα, the decrees ordained.

⁴ Acts viii. 14.

dealings with the Samaritans. For centuries there had existed a bitter feud between them. The Samaritans had been guilty of one of the deadliest of sins—that of schism. In the time of Nehemiah¹ they had erected a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, and had a rival high priest. They were apostates, and Josephus tells us that Jews accused of breaking the law of Moses were accustomed to take refuge in Samaria.² The feud had been kept alive by mutual provocations. The same historian gives an account of an outrage by Samaritans which must have occurred shortly after the Nativity of Christ. At the time of the Passover it was customary to open the gates of the temple just after midnight. Taking advantage of this custom the Samaritans stole into the precincts, and polluted it by throwing dead bodies into it.³

A grosser insult could not have been committed. To the Jews the touch or even the presence of a dead body constituted legal uncleanness. This horrible profanation had occurred in the lifetime of many of the Christian disciples who were called upon to welcome members of the hated race as members of their church. We may be sure that it required all the authority of the apostles to overcome the natural repugnance of the Jews to have fellowship with Samaritans.

About the precise constitution of the governing body of the Church at Jerusalem there is much dispute. This is certain—that it included apostles, elders, (or presbyters), and the brethren or laity. But the nature of the power of the laity has been the subject of endless controversy. That they were present at the election of S. Matthias to the apostleship is expressly stated in the Acts of the Apostles,⁴ and reasons have already been given for concluding that the election was determined by their suffrages. Again, the election of the seven almoners was made by them. The ‘whole multitude’ chose Stephen and his companions, ‘whom they set before the apostles, and when they had prayed they laid their hands upon them.’⁵

In these instances the laity took part in the election of

¹ Milman's *History of the Jews*, b. ix.

² *Antiquities*, b. xi. c. 8.

³ *Ib.* b. xviii. c. 2.

⁴ Acts ii. 15.

⁵ Acts vi. 6.

officers in the church with the sanction of the apostles.¹ But when an important point of doctrine was to be decided it does not appear that the laity had any voice. In the Council at Jerusalem, which determined the question of circumcising the Gentile converts, the lay disciples were present,¹ but they do not seem to have been directly consulted. It is expressly stated that Paul and Barnabas were sent to consult the 'apostles and elders'²—not mentioning the brethren. Again, we are told that the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.³ Again, the decree is said to have been 'ordained of the apostles and elders.'⁴ It is true that we find the statement, 'It seemed good to the apostles and elders with the whole church.' But the probable inference is that the apostles and elders expressed the voice of the Church, and that the laity assented without taking any active part in the discussion.

The main point, however, for the purpose of this narrative is not the exact proportions in which power was distributed among the members of the constituent assembly, but, rather, the fact that such an assembly existed and was thoroughly organised.

There are numerous other references in the Acts of the Apostles to the organisation and active work of the Church at Jerusalem. Among other things it undertook the work of relieving the daily wants of the poorer disciples.⁵ The council to which we have referred is not the only council of that Church mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. At another council, held about fourteen years later, upon the return of S. Paul from one of his missionary tours, 'James and all the elders were present,' and S. Paul was advised by them to observe certain ordinances of the Mosaic law relating to the purification of Nazarites.⁶

¹ This may be inferred from the statement 'and all the multitude (πληθος) kept silence,' Acts xv. 12.

² Acts xv. 2.

³ Acts xv. 6.

⁴ Acts xvi. 4.

⁵ The disciples sold their possessions and 'brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need,' Acts iv. 34.

⁶ Acts xxi. 18.

To realise the actual daily life and practice of the first Christians two circumstances must be constantly borne in mind: first, that they had no churches of their own; secondly, that they continued to observe the Mosaic rites, and were assiduous in their attendance in the temple and in the synagogues.

Churches—or buildings exclusively devoted to Christian worship—did not exist.¹ The disciples assembled for worship at private houses. To this practice there are frequent allusions in the New Testament. Thus we are told in the Acts of the Apostles that the first disciples broke bread—that is, celebrated the Eucharist at home or at a house.² S. Paul sends salutations to Priscilla and Aquila, and ‘the church that is in their house.’³ Again, writing to the Corinthians, he says, ‘Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.’⁴ Similarly, he sends salutations to the brethren at Laodicea,⁵ ‘And Nymphas, and the church that is in his house.’ So also he sends greetings to Philemon and the church in his house.⁶

In the Acts of the Apostles it is stated that the apostles returned to Jerusalem after the departure of Christ, ‘and when they were come they went up into the upper chamber where they were abiding.’ It has been supposed that this was the chamber in which Christ ate the Last Supper with His disciples.⁷ The context shows that the disciples used this room as a place of prayer.

¹ There is no clear example of a separate building set apart for Christian worship within the limits of the Roman empire before the third century.

² Acts ii. 46, *κατ' οἶκον*.

³ Romans xvi. 5.

⁴ 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

⁵ Colossians iv. 15.

⁶ Philemon 2.

⁷ Acts i. 13, *εἰς τὸ ὑπερφῶν* should be translated ‘to the upper chamber,’ not ‘to an upper chamber,’ as in the Authorised Version. The same Greek word for an upper chamber is used in the passage (Acts xx. 18), ‘and there were many lights in the upper chamber where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep.’ Epiphanius (*De Mensur. et ponder.* s. 14) says that Adrian, when he visited Jerusalem about A.D. 110, found all the city in ruins ‘except a few houses and the Church of God, which was small, whither (when the Saviour was taken up from the olive yard) the disciples had returned, and went up to the upper chamber.’ Norris, *Acts of the Apostles*, c. i. In the very ancient Syriac document, called ‘The Doctrines of the Apostles,’ it is distinctly stated

But that they were assiduous in their attendance in the synagogues and in the temple is manifest. The passages in the Acts of the Apostles in which the practice of resorting to the synagogue is mentioned are numerous. Until the fall of Jerusalem the Jewish Christians did not separate themselves from religious communion with their countrymen. They continued to worship with them according to the Mosaic ritual, but had their own place of prayer, in which they celebrated the Eucharist.¹

Their daily life and social condition are briefly and graphically described by S. Luke :—

They then that received his word were baptised, and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. And fear came upon every soul : and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common ; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, as any man had need. And daily continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at a house, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added daily to the Church those that were saved.²

It has been observed in a previous page that from the first the Sanhedrim regarded the new religion with the utmost dis-

that the room in which the disciples assembled was that in which the Last Supper had been celebrated. Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents*, p. 24.

¹ Speaking of the 'disciples in the mother church of Jerusalem,' Bishop Lightfoot eloquently says, 'The temple ritual, the daily sacrifices suggested no scruples to them. The only distinction of meats which they recognised was the distinction of animals clean and unclean, as laid down by the Mosaic law. The only sacrificial victims which they abhorred were victims offered to idols. They took their part in the religious offices, and mixed freely in the common life of their fellow-Israelites, distinguished from them only in this—that to their Hebrew inheritance they superadded the knowledge of a higher truth and the joy of a better hope.'—*Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*, p. 168.

² Acts ii. 41. This passage is translated literally from the Textus Receptus. The deviations from literal accuracy in the Authorised Version are here remarkably numerous. For instance, 'the same day there were added' should be 'at that day' or 'at that time there were added.' For 'in prayers' we should have

like. Peter and John had boldly preached in Solomon's porch, and the high priests and Sadducees 'were sore troubled because they taught the people.' The apostles were arrested and brought to the Sanhedrim more than once, but Gamaliel counselled toleration, and they were suffered to depart with a warning not to offend again. The warning was disregarded.

They therefore departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name. And every day in the temple, and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ.¹

However, the impunity did not long continue. The Sanhedrim determined that an example must be made, and soon afterwards (A.D. 36) S. Stephen was formally condemned for heresy, and put to death. Four years later (A.D. 40) we are told that 'the church throughout all Judæa and Galilee had peace, being edified and walking in the fear of the Lord.'² This taken by itself is a rather perplexing statement. It seems strange at first sight that notwithstanding the hostility of the rulers, and notwithstanding the boldness of the apostles, they and their disciples should have peace.

The explanation is this—that now the Jewish Senate had a more powerful foe and a more pressing danger to deal with. Caius—commonly called Caligula—had succeeded to the imperial throne the very year in which we are told the Church 'had peace.' He madly insulted the Jews' religion, and ordered them to place his statue in the temple. Of course this was to them the most horrible profanity. They told the Governor of Syria that they knew well that they could not resist the overwhelming power of the Roman Emperor, but that they would die rather than submit to this indignity. The manner in which Caligula was diverted from his purpose by the intercession of Herod Agrippa has been already noticed.

'in the prayers.' Again, 'breaking bread from house to house' is clearly wrong. But the most serious error of all is the translation, 'The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.' The Greek words *τοὺς σωζόμενους* undoubtedly mean the saved persons, or those that were saved. It is precisely the same expression which occurs in the passage in Luke xiii. 23, 'Lord, are there few that be saved?' or more literally, 'are the saved people few?'

¹ Acts v. 41.

² Acts ix. 31.

Shortly afterwards, the death of the Emperor relieved the Jews from any fear that his mandate would be carried into effect.¹ But during his short reign of less than five years the Sanhedrim were under a continual terror, and had no time to pursue their quarrel with the Christians.

Herod Agrippa became king of the Jews A.D. 41, and three years afterwards we find that the persecution of the Christians by the Jews had been renewed, and James the Elder was (A.D. 44) put to death. The fact is stated by S. Luke with a brevity which is explained by the consideration that he addresses those to whom the circumstances were familiar:—

Now at that time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also.²

S. Luke is wholly silent as to the charge upon which S. James was condemned, and the nature of the proceedings against him. But here, again, the Jewish historian Josephus gives us some little light.

This Herod, surnamed Agrippa, was made king of Judæa by Claudius, the successor of the Emperor Caligula. Agrippa, though not a native Jew, strictly observed the Mosaic ritual, and upon his accession to the throne hastened to Jerusalem, 'and offered all the sacrifices that belonged to him, and omitted nothing which the law required.'³ Josephus gives probably a too favourable account of his character. He says:—

Agrippa's temper was mild and equally liberal to all men. He was humane to foreigners, and made them sensible of his liberality. He was, in like manner, rather of a gentle and compassionate temper. Accordingly, he loved to live at Jerusalem, and was careful in the observance of the laws of his country. He therefore kept himself entirely pure; nor did any day pass over his head without the appointed sacrifices.⁴

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xviii. c. 3. Josephus (b. xix. c. 1) gives a minute account of the assassination of Caius and the succession of Claudius. The books of Tacitus' *Annals*, relating to the period, have been lost.

² Acts xii. 1.

³ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xix. c. 6.

⁴ *Ib.* b. xix. c. 7.

On the accession of Claudius the policy which Caligula had adopted with respect to the Jews was completely reversed. A series of edicts were issued throughout the empire, enjoining full toleration of the Jewish religion. Moreover, the new Emperor discontinued the appointment of Roman procurators of Judæa, and gave the people a king whose religion was their own. Agrippa, on his part, studied to conciliate his subjects, and either from conviction or from motives of policy distinguished himself as a devout Jew. We can readily understand that in these circumstances he would be willing to please the Jews by persecuting the hated sect of Christians.

This seems quite sufficient to explain the killing of James by the sword and the arrest of Peter. These acts apparently were not illegal, for the Jewish laws were now in full force again, and under these laws schism was a capital crime.

Of the James who thus suffered little is known. He is styled 'the Great,' or 'the Elder,' to distinguish him from James the cousin of Jesus. James the Elder, the son of Zebedee, was the first of the apostles who suffered martyrdom. Eusebius gives a description of this event on the high authority of Clement of Alexandria:—

Of this James Clement adds a narrative worthy of note in the seventh book of his 'Institutions,'¹ evidently recording it according to the tradition which he had received from his ancestors. He says that the man who led him to the judgment-seat, seeing him bearing his testimony to the faith, and moved by the fact, confessed himself a Christian. Both, therefore, says he, were led away to die. On their way he entreated James to forgive him, and James, considering a little, replied, 'Peace be to thee,' and kissed him; and then both were beheaded at the same time.²

There seems no reason to distrust this account. Clement of Alexandria is a writer of unassailed reputation. He wrote within 150 years of the events in question, and the story is inherently probable.

The Church at Jerusalem remained under the presidency of

¹ The 'Institutions' or 'Hypotyposes' of Clement of Alexandria are mentioned by Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History*, b. v. c. 11 and b. vi. c. 13.

² *Ib.* b. ii. c. 9.

the other S. James until his martyrdom, which, as will be shown hereafter, occurred shortly before the overthrow of the city. The rest of the apostles left Jerusalem some time previously, though the time is not accurately known.¹ Previously to that time the apostles, elders, and disciples constituted a regularly organised body which met for consultation. This appears clearly from various notices in the Acts of interviews between S. Paul and the 'Church' or the 'apostles and elders.' When he returned from his frequent missionary journeys to Jerusalem he had such interviews with the Church, and doubtless on those occasions reported the progress of his mission.² It seems reasonable to suppose that the same course was adopted by some of the other apostles, who were similarly engaged in missions.

Of some of those missions an account will be given hereafter. For the present it will be convenient to confine the attention to events which affected the condition of the mother church in the holy city.

About nine years after the death of James the Great an

¹ Archdeacon Norris, in his admirable work, *The Key to the Acts of the Apostles*, p. 58, is of opinion that on the death of S. James the Elder, the apostles, except S. James the Bishop, left Jerusalem. This opinion appears to be founded on two texts. The first is in Acts xii. 17, where S. Peter, after his liberation from prison, tells the damsel Rhoda, 'Go, show these things unto James and the brethren. And he departed and went into another place.' But it does not follow that this other place was outside Jerusalem. The second text on which Archdeacon Norris relies is Acts xi. 30, where it is stated that alms were sent 'to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.' To infer from this that elders only and not apostles were at Jerusalem would be to prove too much; for it is quite certain that S. James the Bishop was then at Jerusalem. It is scarcely probable that all the other apostles left Jerusalem A.D. 44, and returned A.D. 50 to hold the council at Jerusalem.

² In the Acts five such visits of S. Paul are mentioned. They were made at intervals during more than twenty years:—

Acts ix. 23, 'But Barnabas took him by the hand and brought him to the apostles' (A.D. 38).

Acts xi. 30, Alms sent from Antioch to the elders by the hands of 'Barnabas and Saul' (A.D. 40).

Acts xv. 2, Paul and Barnabas consulted 'the apostles and elders' on the question of circumcising Gentile converts (A.D. 50).

Acts xviii. 21, Paul went to Jerusalem, 'and sauted the Church' (A.D. 54).

Acts xxi. 17, 'And when we were come to Jerusalem the brethren received us gladly' (A.D. 58).

The dates are taken from Norris's *Key to the Acts of the Apostles*.

event occurred which had a considerable influence on the history of the Church—the appointment of Felix¹ (who subsequently caused S. Paul to be imprisoned for two years) to be Governor of Judæa. Tacitus has given a deplorable account of the distracted condition of the Jews, caused by their old feuds with the Samaritans and the misrule of Felix.

Felix, for some time Governor of Judæa, . . . supposed that he might perpetrate with impunity every kind of villainy. It must be admitted that the Jews had exhibited some evidence of insurrection in the disturbance which broke out. . . . Felix meanwhile, by applying unseasonable remedies, inflamed the disaffection, emulated as he was in his abandoned courses by Ventidius Cumanus, who held part of the province—the division being such that Galilee was subject to Cumanus and Samaria to Felix: nations long at variance, and now, from contempt of their rulers, less than ever restraining their reciprocal hate. Accordingly, mutual depredations were committed, bands of robbers employed, ambuscades formed, and sometimes battles fought, and the spoil and booty obtained were given to their governors, who at first rejoiced over it. But when the mischief increased they interposed their troops and their men were slain; and but for the aid of Quadratus, ruler of Syria, the whole province had been in a blaze of war. Nor in the proceedings against the Jews, who had carried their violence so far as to kill our soldiers, was there any hesitation about punishing them capitally.²

In another place Tacitus concisely describes Felix as a man who 'in cruelty and lust exercised the power of a king with the disposition of a slave.'³

There is a very curious and remarkable passage in Josephus, which gives an account of the connection of Felix with the Herod family. This passage gives a frightful picture of their morals. One sister of Herod Agrippa obtained a divorce from her husband in order to marry Felix. Another sister, Bernice, lived in incest, first with her uncle and then with

¹ The appointment of Felix must have been about A.D. 53, as Josephus says it took place when Claudius had completed the twelfth year of his reign.

² *Annals*, b. xii. c. 54.

³ 'Per omnem sevitiā et libidinem jus regium servili ingenio exercuit.'—*Historiar. lib. v. c. 9.*

her brother. The women of this vile family seem to have been even more wicked—if possible—than the men. It may be mentioned incidentally that S. Paul pleaded before Agrippa and Bernice, when Festus had succeeded Felix as Governor of Judæa.

While Felix was procurator of Judæa he saw this Drusilla—and fell in love with her, for she did indeed exceed all other women in beauty. And he sent to her a person whose name was Simon and one of his friends—a Jew he was and by birth a Cypriot, and one who pretended to be a magician—and endeavoured to persuade her to forsake her present husband and marry him. He promised that if she would not refuse him he would make her a happy woman. Accordingly she acted ill, and because she was desirous to avoid her sister Bernice's envy—for she was very ill-treated by her on account of her beauty—was prevailed upon to transgress the laws of her forefathers and to marry Felix. And when he had a son by her he named him Agrippa; but after what manner that young man with his wife perished at the conflagration of the mountain Vesuvius in the days of Titus Cæsar shall be related hereafter.¹

But as for Bernice she lived a widow a long while after the death of Herod, who was both her husband and her uncle. But when the report went that she had criminal conversation with her brother she persuaded Polemo, who was king of Cilicia, to be circumcised and to marry her; as supposing that by this means she should prove those calumnies upon her to be false. And Polemo was prevailed upon, and that chiefly on account of her riches.² Yet did not this matrimony endure long. But Bernice left Polemo, and, as was said, with impure

¹ Josephus here refers to the eruption of Vesuvius, by which Pompeii and Herculaneum were buried. Unfortunately, his narrative of that event is not extant.

² The wealth and profligacy of this woman and her bigoted observance of Jewish rites were famous at Rome. Juvenal, ridiculing the extravagance of his times, describes a woman who buys a diamond more costly than that worn by Bernice, which 'the barbarian Agrippa gave to his incestuous sister in that place [Jerusalem], where kings observe Sabbath festivals barefooted.'

adamus notissimus et Berenices

In digito factus pretiosior. Hunc dedit olim

Barbarus incestæ, dedit hunc Agrippa sorori

Observant ubi festa macro pede sabbata reges.—*Sat.* vi. 155.

intentions. So she forsook at once this matrimony and the Jewish religion.¹

Under the procuratorship of Felix, Judæa was in a state of anarchy. The country was filled, says Josephus, with robbers and impostors. Great numbers of them were seized and put to death, and yet the lawlessness increased. An upright high priest, Jonathan, rebuked Felix for his misrule, and warned him that, unless he governed better, formal complaints would be made against him to the Roman Government. Felix, irritated by these admonitions, caused Jonathan to be assassinated.

As this murder was never avenged the robbers went up with the greatest security at the festivals after this time; and having weapons concealed in like manner as before, and mingling themselves among the multitude, they slew certain of their own enemies, and were subservient to other men for money. They slew others, not only in remote parts of the city, but in the temple itself also, for they had the boldness to murder men there without thinking of the impiety of which they were guilty; and this seems to me the reason why God, out of His hatred to these men's wickedness, rejected our city; and as for the temple, He no longer esteemed it sufficiently pure for Him to inhabit therein, but brought the Romans upon us and threw a fire upon the city to purge it, and brought upon us, our wives, and children slavery, as desirous to make us wiser by our calamities.²

The same author gives numerous other instances of the miserable confusion to which Judæa was reduced. One of these illustrates in a striking manner the lawlessness that prevailed. Dissensions arose among the priests themselves. The chief priests and the priests of lower rank were divided into two factions, and their partisans, when they met in the streets, encountered each other with invectives and stones. So great, says Josephus, was the audacity of the chief priests that they sent their servants to the barns to

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xx. c. 7.

² *Ib.* b. xx. c. 8.

seize the tithes due to the priests, so that some of the poorer priests died for want.¹

Such was the state of society at Jerusalem when S. Paul appeared before Felix and the Sanhedrim to plead for his life. The narrative of that event in the Acts of the Apostles exactly tallies with the descriptions given by Tacitus and Josephus of the prevalent anarchy and dissensions.

It was a strange reverse of fortune which brought S. Paul as prisoner before the very tribunal of which he had been a member, and from which he had received, formerly, a commission to persecute the Christians.

On the occasion of one of his visits to Jerusalem (A.D. 58) S. Paul, it has already been remarked, had, by the advice of S. James and the Church, attended certain solemn rites in the temple in order to show his conformity with the Mosaic law. There he was found by some fanatic Jews from Asia, who charged him with heretical teaching and profanation of the temple. He was taken before the commander of the Roman garrison, who the next day convened the Sanhedrim, in order that S. Paul might be tried² before it.

And Paul, looking stedfastly at the Sanhedrim, said, Brethren,³ I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.⁴

S. Paul resented the brutal act with justifiable indignation.

Then said Paul unto him, God is about⁵ to smite thee, thou whited wall. And thou sittest judging me according to the law, and transgressing the law dost thou bid me to be smitten?

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xx. c. 8. Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.*, b. ii. c. 20. These events occurred when Ismael was high priest, and, therefore, shortly after the trial of S. Paul before the Sanhedrim when Ananias was high priest.

² That it was a regular trial is clear from the words which S. Paul addresses to the chief priest, 'Thou sittest judging me according to the law.'

³ It is observable that he addresses the council as brethren: a designation natural enough on the supposition that he was or lately had been one of their colleagues.

⁴ Acts xxiii. 1, 2.

⁵ τύπτειν σε μέλλει ὁ Θεός. The life of this Ananias was strangely adventurous. He was made high priest A.D. 49, and shortly before the procuratorship of Felix, A.D. 53, was sent under arrest to Rome to answer a charge

It has been already stated that feuds existed among the priests themselves. We can therefore readily understand the unseemly dissensions which arose in the council chamber when S. Paul spoke of the resurrection from the dead.

There arose a great clamour : and some of the Scribes of the Pharisees' part stood up and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man ; and what if a spirit hath spoken to him or an angel ? And when there arose a great dissension the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him to the castle.¹

In this undignified and tumultuous manner the great Council of the Jews was broken up. Another remarkable illustration of the lawlessness and turbulence of the times was the plot of some fanatics to seize Paul and slay him. There were about forty in this conspiracy.

And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. Now therefore do ye with the Sanhedrim signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you, as though you would judge of his case more exactly : and we, or ever he come near, are ready to slay him.²

This murderous plot was frustrated by S. Paul's nephew. He in some way came to hear of it, and immediately gave information to his uncle, who directed him to proceed at once to the governor and warn him of the conspiracy. The governor acted with military promptness. Without a moment's delay he ordered an escort of soldiers to be got ready, and in the dead of the night sent Paul, under their protection, to Casarea, to the Governor Felix.

S. Paul was kept for a few days in the prætorium. Then

of promoting war between the Jews and Samaritans. On this charge Ananias was acquitted, and he returned to Jerusalem. He presided at the trial of S. Paul, A.D. 58. At the commencement of the insurrection of the Jews against the Romans (A.D. 66) his palace was burnt by the mob. He concealed himself in the sewers, but after a few days was caught by the insurgents and murdered. — Josephus, *Wars*, b. ii. c. 17.

¹ Acts xxiii. 9.

² Acts xxiii. 14.

the high priest Ananias, and those members of the Sanhedrim who were most active in prosecuting the apostle, went to Cæsarea with an advocate named Tertullus, whom they had retained for the prosecution.

The trial began. Tertullus accused the prisoner of being a mover of insurrections and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, and charged him with profaning the temple.

S. Paul replied to this effect,—So far was he from profaning the temple, that he had gone there to worship as a Jew, he had avoided preaching, and there was no crowd or tumult in the temple. As to the charge of belonging to the sect of the Nazarenes, that indeed was perfectly true.

Felix deferred his decision. He would wait, he said, until the commander of the garrison came to Cæsarea, and gave him further information. Meanwhile, Paul was to remain in custody; but was to be treated indulgently, and his friends were to have free access to him.

Some time afterwards Felix came with Drusilla—his adulterous wife, and heard Paul again. And ‘as he reasoned of righteousness, and temperance, and the judgment to come, Felix trembled’—as he had good cause to do.

He dismissed the prisoner hastily—said he would proceed with the trial at a more convenient season. But the convenient season never arrived. Felix kept the apostle in prison for two years, frequently sending for him privately during that time, and conversing with him, in the hope that he would offer a bribe to be released.

But the judge himself was put on his trial at Rome before the prisoner. The complaints against Felix became so general that he was recalled, and by the direction of the Emperor Claudius tried for misgovernment. Powerful influence was exercised in his favour, and he escaped without any other punishment than the loss of his office.¹

¹ Josephus distinctly states that the trial took place at Rome in the reign of Nero, after Festus succeeded Felix (*Antiquities*, b. xx. c. 8). Tacitus, with equal distinctness, states that the trial of Felix and his colleague Cumanus was directed by the Emperor Claudius, ‘Claudius causis rebellionis auditis jus statuendi etiam de procuratoribus dederat,’ *Annals*, xii. 54. In *The Life of S. Paul* by Conybeare and Howson there is an elaborate note (vol. ii. p. 663)

The conspiracy to assassinate S. Paul, which had failed during the government of Felix, was renewed in the procuratorship of his successor.

Festus succeeded to the government of Judæa. A few days after his arrival in his province he went to Jerusalem, and there the chief priests and some of the principal men begged him to send Paul to Jerusalem. Their intention was to lay wait for him and kill him on the way, but Festus suspected them. Probably he was aware of the former conspiracy, and was on his guard. At all events, he replied that Paul was at Cæsarea, and if they wanted to accuse him the prosecution must take place there, and this was accordingly done. Festus came to the conclusion that the charges against Paul were not offences against the civil law. Paul claimed his right of appeal to Cæsar, and Festus, after conference with his council,¹ decided that the claim of appeal must be allowed.

Shortly afterwards Agrippa the king and Bernice visited the Roman governor, who mentioned Paul's case to them. Festus was in this difficulty—he was satisfied that the charges against the prisoner were merely questions of Jewish superstition,² but as he had decided to send him to Rome, it would be necessary to state in writing the nature of the accusation or indictment against him. It was therefore arranged that Paul should be heard again in the presence of Agrippa—not to be tried, for the matter was now beyond the jurisdiction of an inferior tribunal—but in order that the charge upon which he was to be sent to Rome might be ascertained and stated.

So on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice,

on the date of the recall of Felix, and the date assigned is A.D. 60. Norris (*Acts of the Apostles*, App. c. 5) adopts the same date. If it is correct, the trial was delayed for six years, for Nero succeeded Claudius A.D. 54. There is no great improbability in this. S. Paul was detained at Rome two years before he was tried.

¹ *συμβουλίου*. This must have been the council over which the Roman governor presided—not the Sanhedrim.

² Acts xxv. 19. *ζητήματα δὲ τινα περὶ τῆς ἰδίας δεισιδαιμονίας*, certain topics of their own superstition. The word is generally used in an ignoble sense; and, according to its derivation, means dread of supernatural powers.

with great pomp, and were entered into the audience chamber,¹ with the chief captains and the principal men of the city, at the command of Festus Paul was brought in.

The Agrippa here mentioned was the son of that Herod Agrippa who in a previous chapter was styled the last of the kings of the Jews, and is distinguished from his father by the title of Agrippa II., or Agrippa the Younger.

He does not appear to have ever been formally appointed king of the Jews, though he took a considerable part in the government of the country. For instance, on several occasions he appointed high priests at Jerusalem.² At the time of his father's decease he was only seventeen years of age. The Emperor at the time was Claudius, with whom he was brought up at Rome. The Emperor considered him too young to be appointed king of so large a country as Judæa,³ but after some time made him King of Chalcis.⁴

At the time when Paul was heard before him, Agrippa II. was about thirty-three years of age.⁵ He appears to have resided principally at Jerusalem, where he had a magnificent palace close to the temple.⁶ It was probably from Jerusalem that Agrippa and Bernice went to Cæsarea to salute Festus. Of the horrible relations existing at the time between Agrippa and his sister there cannot be a doubt. It has already been stated that after her adulterous marriage with her uncle had terminated by his death, she lived in incest with her brother, this 'King Agrippa,' that she afterwards married Polemo, and after a short time left him and returned to her brother,⁷ with whom she was living at the period of the visit to Cæsarea.

It was before wretches so vile as these that the great

¹ ἀκροατήριον, Acts xxv. 23.

² He appointed Ananias, Ismael, Ananus, Jesus, son of Gamaliel, among others, and exercised an absolute power of deposing high priests.—Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xx. cc. 5, 8, and 9.

³ *Ib.* b. xix. c. 9.

⁴ *Ib.* b. xx. c. 5.

⁵ This follows from the consideration that he was seventeen years of age at the time of the death of his father, A.D. 44, and that the visit to Festus took place A.D. 60.

⁶ *Antiquities*, b. xx. c. 8.

⁷ Her profligacy did not end here. She subsequently formed a criminal connection with Titus, the conqueror of Jerusalem.

apostle was called upon to make his defence touching those things of which he was accused of the Jews. That S. Paul knew the character of this king and his infamous sister there cannot be a doubt, and it is observable that the prisoner does not address Agrippa with any title of respect. Festus, indeed, is styled 'excellent.'¹ Agrippa receives his official title of 'king,' and nothing more.

There is also an observable difference in the way in which the two men address Paul. Festus pays a compliment to his learning. Agrippa rudely interrupts him with the exclamation, 'To put it briefly, you are trying to make a Christian of me.'² That the words are used sarcastically and contemptuously seems clear. They amount to this—You are making a long harangue, of which the upshot is that you would persuade me—the king who appoints high priests, and strictly observes the Jewish rites—to adopt your new-fangled religion. S. Paul, however, is not provoked by this insolence to an angry retort, but contents himself with the noble reply—'I would pray God, that whether with few words or with many, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am except these bonds.'

Then the court rose. Festus and Agrippa agreed that 'this fellow'³ might have been released if he had not appealed unto Cæsar. As it was, there was no alternative but to send

¹ κράτιστε.

² Ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι. That this is the meaning of the passage seems to be shown by the following considerations. Firstly, it is exceedingly unlikely that such a wretch as Agrippa would be disposed to adopt the despised religion of S. Paul. Secondly, there is an antithesis in the rejoinder, καὶ ἐν ὀλίγῳ καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ, which indicates the meaning of the passage. S. Paul repeats the phrase ἐν ὀλίγῳ, and therefore uses it in the same sense in which Agrippa had used it. In the Authorised Version S. Paul is made to express a wish that his hearers were 'both almost and altogether such as I am except these bonds.' But this is unmeaning, for Paul could not have wished anyone to be almost a Christian. In the Revised Version ἐν ὀλίγῳ is translated 'with but little persuasion,' but there is no word in the original for 'persuasion.' Another strong argument for translating ἐν ὀλίγῳ 'in brief,' or 'in a few words,' is that S. Paul uses the phrase in that sense in the Epistle to the Ephesians, iii. 3, where he says, 'as I wrote before in a few words.' The phrase has precisely the same meaning in Plato's *Apology*, s. 7, ἐγνων οὖν καὶ περὶ τῶν ποιητῶν ἐν ὀλίγῳ τοῦτο = 'in brief I found out thus much about the poets.'

ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος.

him to Rome. It is a curious circumstance that S. Paul and his former oppressor went to Rome to take their trials almost at the same time. Felix commenced the journey in the summer A.D. 60, and S. Paul in the following autumn.¹ After two years' delay, S. Paul was tried and acquitted. But in this chapter, which relates to the Church at Jerusalem, it will not be necessary to consider the circumstances of S. Paul's first visit to Rome.

Our account of the Church at Jerusalem draws to a close, not from lack of interest in the subject, but from lack of materials. S. Luke accompanied S. Paul on his voyage to Rome, and thenceforward is silent respecting the affairs of the mother church.

Of one event of supreme importance in the history of that church—the death of S. James, her first bishop—Josephus is supposed to give an account. That historian states that, upon the death of Festus (A.D. 62), Albinus was appointed procurator of Judæa, and Ananus was appointed high priest nearly at the same time.

This younger Ananus, who, as we have told you already, took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper and very insolent. He was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who were very rigid in judging offenders above all the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed. When, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition he thought he had now a proper opportunity [to exercise his authority].

Festus was now dead and Albinus was but upon the road, so he assembled the Sanhedrim of the judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others. And when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law he delivered them to be stoned. But as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done. They also sent to the king [Agrippa], desiring him to send to Ananus that he should act so no more, for that what he had already done was not to be justified. Nay, some of them went to meet Albinus, as he was upon his journey from Alexandria,

¹ Conybeare and Howson, *Life of S. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 669.

and informed him that it was not lawful for Ananus to assemble a Sanhedrim without his consent. Whereupon Albinus complied with what they had said, and wrote in anger to Ananus and threatened that he would bring him to punishment for what he had done; on which King Agrippa took the high priesthood from him when he had ruled but three months, and made Jesus, son of Damneus, high priest.¹

It has been frequently inferred from this passage that James was put to death when Albinus was appointed procurator,² that is, about eight years before the fall of Jerusalem. But this is quite inconsistent with the statements of writers of the highest authority, who expressly testify that the martyrdom of S. James occurred immediately before the invasion of Judæa. These apparent discrepancies may be easily explained. The words relating to S. James in the passage just quoted are probably an interpolation;³ if that be so, the passage refers not to S. James but to some other person. Secondly, if we admit the disputed words to be genuine, we find that the passage does not state that the sentence of stoning was executed; on the contrary, the hurried message to Albinus while on his road would rather indicate an attempt to stay execution of the sentence. Again, the theory that S. James was stoned to death in pursuance of a judicial sentence is directly opposed to the statement of a writer of the highest authority—S. Clement of Alexandria—who says that the apostle was thrown from a pinnacle of the temple, and beaten to death by a fuller's club. Moreover, Eusebius himself states expressly that the capture of Jerusalem 'immediately followed' the martyrdom of S. James.⁴

The statement of Clement is corroborated by Hegesippus,⁵

¹ *Antiquities*, b. xx. c. 9.

² Albinus was appointed Governor of Judæa, A.D. 62. The siege of Jerusalem was A.D. 70.

³ This is the opinion of a very learned writer of the last century, Dr. Nathaniel Lardner (*History of the Apostles*, c. xvi.).

⁴ Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, b. iii. c. 11. One MS. of the *Apostolical Constitutions* says, 'James the brother of the Lord had been killed with sticks by the Jews in Jerusalem on account of the doctrines of Christ,' b. viii. c. 35.

⁵ The passage from Hegesippus is quoted by Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, b. ii. c. 23. The narrative is given in a very rhetorical form, and appears

who gives a long account of the martyrdom; to the effect that, at the time of the Passover, James, while proclaiming his faith in Christ, was thrown down from a pinnacle of the temple and stoned, and that a fuller beat out his brains with a club used for beating clothes. Hegesippus adds, 'immediately after this Vespasian invaded and took Judæa.'

There are other circumstances that strongly confirm this conclusion. If we suppose that S. James died eight years before the siege of Jerusalem, we must also suppose that during all those eight years the metropolitan church remained without a bishop or chief pastor. This is incredible, as it was clearly of the utmost importance to the cause of Christianity that the Church at Jerusalem should be regularly organised and governed. Eusebius has an important statement on this point.

After the martyrdom of James and the capture of Jerusalem, which immediately followed, it is reported that those of the apostles and disciples of our Lord that were yet surviving came together from all parts with those that were related to our Lord according to the flesh: for the greater part of them were yet living. These consulted together to determine whom it was proper to pronounce worthy of being the successor of James. They all unanimously declared Simon, the son of Clopas—of whom mention is made in the sacred volume—as worthy of the episcopal seat.¹

Some time before the death of S. James—but how long it is now impossible to determine—the other apostles had left Jerusalem. Eusebius says:—

The rest of the apostles, who were harassed in innumerable ways, with a view to destroy them and drive them from the land of Judæa, had gone forth to preach the Gospel to all nations, relying upon the aid of Christ when He said, 'Go ye, teach all nations in My name.'

to be inaccurate in some particulars; still, as to the main facts of the time and manner of the death of James, it seems trustworthy. Dr. Lardner (*History of the Apostles*, ch. xvi.) and Bishop Lightfoot (*Epistle to the Colossians*, p. 168) comment on the statements of Hegesippus. There is a long discussion of the subject in that very curious book, Whiston's *Primitive Christianity*.

¹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, b. iii. c. 11.

One more glimpse is given by the same writer of the history of the infant church before the final overthrow of the city. He proceeds:—

The whole body, however, of the Church at Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety before the war, removed from the city and dwelt at a certain town beyond Jordan called Pella.¹

This removal of the Christian Jews to a neighbouring town has been sometimes represented as a base and traitorous desertion of their countrymen in their sorest need.² But the same thing was done by many of those who adhered to the Jewish faith. A large party among them, altogether opposed to the war, saw plainly that resistance to the overwhelming Roman power was futile, and considered that the best interests of their country would be served by submission. In large numbers they escaped from the fated city as from a sinking vessel.³ Why, then, should the Christians be reproached for taking the same course? They simply obeyed the command—

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof draweth nigh. Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out, and let not them which are in the countries enter thereinto.⁴

¹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, b. iii. c. 5.

² *Judaism Surveyed*, by Dr. A. Benisch.

³ Josephus, *Wars*, b. ii. c. 20.

⁴ Luke xxi.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.

THE histories of all ancient nations are full of calamities ; but beyond comparison that of the Jews is the most calamitous. If we look down the long vista of ages, from the time of Pharaoh, when the children of Israel sighed by reason of their bondage, to the final overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus, the fate of the nation was a continual tragedy.

In reading the books of the Old Testament one cannot fail to notice the frequency with which the sufferings of the Jews are described. The Hebrew poets, in language of solemn beauty and pathos, refer to the repeated desolations of their country. Take, for instance, the wonderful description of Jeremiah¹ :—

The Lord hath cast off His altar, He hath abhorred His sanctuary, He hath given up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces ; they have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as in the day of a solemn feast.

The Lord hath purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion ; He hath stretched out a line, He hath not withdrawn His hand from destroying : therefore He made the rampart and the wall to lament ; they languished together.

Her gates are sunk into the ground ; He hath destroyed and broken her bars : her kings and her princes are among the Gentiles : the law is no more.

Josephus² enumerates six sieges of Jerusalem before the final overthrow by Titus. Woe upon woe, sorrow upon sorrow, desolation after desolation befell this hapless people. But at last came a final overthrow, a destruction supreme and irre-

¹ Lamentations ii. 7-9.

² Wars, b. vi. c. 10.

vocable, after which the Jews were to cease to be a nation,¹ and the fire of the altar was to be extinguished for evermore—a time when the enemies of Jerusalem would cast a trench about her, and compass her round and keep her in on every side, and lay her even with the ground, and her children within her, and not leave in her one stone upon another.

While these terrible events were happening others of equal moment in the history of early Christianity occurred in other parts of the world. The first persecution at Rome, the martyrdom of the two apostles S. Paul and S. Peter, and the death of Nero, all preceded the destruction of Jerusalem.¹ But for the sake of clearness it will be convenient to confine our attention here to the war in Judæa.²

From the very first the Jews had borne the Roman yoke impatiently. That yoke was imposed by Pompey when he captured Jerusalem (B.C. 63). Thenceforward, from time to time, large money payments³ were exacted from the conquered race; but the first introduction of a regular system of tribute appears to have been the decree of Augustus, mentioned by S. Luke, 'that all the world should be enrolled.' This decree almost led to a rebellion, but the Jews were at length

¹ The open revolt of Judæa against the Roman authority commenced A.D. 66, the very year of S. Paul's martyrdom at Rome.

² Our principal authority on the subject is Josephus. Tacitus, in the fifth book of his *History*, concisely describes the commencement of the war, but the conclusion of his narrative is no longer extant. Josephus must be read with caution when he speaks of matters personal to himself or of his protectors, Titus and Vespasian. The historian, by his own account, was a renegade. After fighting on the side of the Jews, he accepted the clemency of the Romans. Of course he represents this transaction in the manner most favourable to himself. Again, he speaks in laudatory terms of the Roman leaders, and praises their moderation and clemency. Of the 'clemency' of Titus the following is a specimen. After the war was over he sent great numbers of Jewish captives into the provinces 'as a present to them that they might be destroyed in their theatres by the sword and wild beasts.' (Josephus, *Wars*, b. vi. c. 9.) At Caesarea, again, he celebrated his brother's birthday by killing in this way 2,500 Jews. Titus is not to be judged by modern rules of warfare, but, according to our ideas, his atrocities were absolutely fiendish. But, after making the most ample deductions where the narrative of Josephus is likely to be biased, we may safely rely upon it as trustworthy in all particulars in which he had not motives for partiality.

³ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xiv. c. 4, s. 5.

induced to submit by the persuasion of their high priest.¹ Of the subsequent rulers one or two were somewhat more popular than the rest. King Agrippa propitiated his subjects by an ostentatious observance of their religion, and Festus seems to have been a better governor than most of the other procurators.² But the Jews were almost always on the verge of insurrection. They submitted to the Romans with hatred and indignation, and were restrained from rebellion only by fear of the vast power of their rulers.

The first act of open revolt occurred when Gessius Florus was procurator. The people, though sorely tried by his predecessor Albinus, had not actually rebelled. But Florus, who succeeded him A.D. 65, drove them to desperation.³ According to Josephus, this man deliberately resolved to force the Jews into insurrection by his tyranny. He robbed the sacred treasury, and thus occasioned a tumult. Thereupon he collected his soldiers and advanced against Jerusalem. The Jews offered their submission; but instead of accepting it he directed an indiscriminate pillage and slaughter of unarmed citizens.

The soldiers, taking this exhortation of their commander in a sense agreeable to their desire of gain, did not only plunder the place they were sent to, but forcing themselves into every house they slew the inhabitants. So the citizens fled along the narrow lanes, and the soldiers slew those that they caught, and no method of plunder was omitted. They also caught many of the quiet people and brought them before Florus, whom he first chastised with stripes and then crucified. Accordingly, the whole number of those that were

¹ 'But the Jews, though at first they took the report of a taxation heinously, yet did they leave off any further opposition to it by the persuasion of Joazar, son of Boethus and high priest. So they being over-persuaded by Joazar's words, gave an account of their estates without any dispute. Yet there was one Judas, a Gaulonite, of a city named Gamala, who, taking with him Sadduc, a Pharisee, became zealous to draw them to a revolt, saying this taxation was an introduction to slavery.'—Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xviii. c. 1, s. 1.

² Josephus compares him favourably with his successor Albinus.—*Wars*, b. ii. c. 14, s. 1.

³ This is the account of Josephus (*Wars*, b. ii. c. 14), and it is confirmed by Tacitus, 'Duravit tamen patientia Judæis usque ad Gessium Florum procuratorem; sub eo bellum ortum.'—*Hist. lib. v. c. 10*.

destroyed that day, with their wives and children (for they did not spare the infants themselves), was about three thousand six hundred. And what made the matter worse was this new method of Roman barbarity: for Florus ventured then to do what no one had done before—that is, to have men of the equestrian order whipped and nailed to the cross before his tribunal; who although they were by birth Jews, yet were they of Roman dignity notwithstanding.¹

Bernice, the sister of Agrippa, was in Jerusalem at the time. With all her wickedness this vile woman retained some instincts of humanity. She was at the time in the temple performing a religious vow and worshipping with bare feet.² Horrified by the scenes of bloodshed and cruelty, she rushed barefooted as she was to the tribunal of Florus, and besought him to spare the Jews. But not even her rank and influence were sufficient to procure respect for her entreaties, and she did not escape without danger of her own life.

The story of the overthrow of Jerusalem has been so often told, that it will not be necessary here to give more than a brief epitome of the principal events. Agrippa saw the hopelessness of the contest with the Romans, and endeavoured to persuade the Jews to submit. They, however, rejected his counsel. The revolt was a mad enterprise, for what chance of success had one small province against the disciplined armies of Cæsar? But the Jews were rendered desperate by the cruelties of their governors. Besides that, they were encouraged in their resistance by the popular belief in a coming Messiah, who was to lead them to victory. Tacitus, in a remarkable passage, says there was a general expectation, founded on the ancient books of the priests, that the East was about to triumph, and that some who set forth from Judæa would attain supreme power. But, he adds, these mysterious

¹ *Wars of the Jews*, b. ii. c. 14.

² Whiston suggests that this was a kind of penance imposed by the traditions of the Pharisees. Evidently the story of Bernice worshipping with naked feet soon reached Rome. The allusion in Juvenal to the circumstance has been quoted in the last chapter.

sayings were prophecies of the power of Vespasian and Titus.¹

Indeed, at the commencement of the war there did, for a short time, seem some slight hope of success. The first general sent to put down the insurrection—Cestius, prefect of Syria—was repulsed from before the walls of Jerusalem with great slaughter of his troops. The news of this defeat was received at Rome with the utmost indignation. That Roman soldiers should be put to flight by rebels was intolerable. The very existence of the empire would be threatened if the dependent nations learned that they might with impunity defy Cæsar. With hot haste Nero summoned Vespasian from Britain, where he had proved himself an able general by subjugating the hardy races which inhabited this remote island. Vespasian obeyed the summons with soldierly promptness, and with his son Titus was soon on his way from the extreme west to the extreme east of the Roman empire.

Before they reached the seat of war the whole of Judæa was in arms. The first year of the campaign, conducted by Vespasian (A.D. 67-68), was occupied in the siege and reduction of towns of minor importance. Instead of marching against the capital, he laid waste Galilee and its vicinity: his object being, according to Josephus, to give the Jews at Jerusalem time for repentance.²

But news arrived from Rome of events of more interest to Vespasian than the subjugation of a province. Nero was dead, and his death made a way for Vespasian to the imperial throne. For about one year (A.D. 68-69) that magnificent prize was sought for and almost grasped by three aspirants,

¹ 'Pluribus persuasio inerat antiquis literis contineri eo ipso tempore fore ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur. Quæ ambages Vespasianum et Titum prædixerant.'—*Hist.* b. v. c. 13. This so exactly agrees with a passage in the *Wars of the Jews* that it cannot be doubted that Tacitus here copied Josephus. The Jewish historian says, 'What did most elevate them in undertaking this war was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how "about that time one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth." The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular, and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination. Now this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed Emperor in Judæa.'—*Wars*, b. vi. c. 5.

² *Wars*, b. vi. c. 6.

Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. But neither of them was ever undisputed master of the empire. It was a time of anarchy for Rome herself, and the armies of different parts of the empire attempted to make their own military commanders the chief rulers of the state. For our purpose it would be useless to follow out the various intrigues in detail. It is sufficient to say that somewhat more than a year after the death of Nero, the supreme power became vested in Vespasian, the leader of the armies in Judæa.

Thereupon Vespasian betook himself to Rome, and committed to his son Titus the task of completing the conquest of Judæa. The Jews had nearly two years of respite from the active operations of the Roman army; and during that time for reflection might have made their peace with the masters of the world. There was always a party within the city anxious to take this course, but there were other parties, among whom were the 'Zealots,' who resisted all suggestions of submission.

Josephus, in long wearisome chapters, has pursued the narrative of these dissensions with terrible prolixity. The result, however, may be very briefly stated. The city was distracted by civil discord. The Jews, instead of submitting to the common foe or uniting their forces against him, turned against each other and weakened themselves by mutual slaughter. Indeed, the Romans for a time adopted a cynical policy of deferring their attack while the Jews did their work for them, by destroying each other.

At the very time when Titus approached the walls of Jerusalem (A.D. 69), there were three distinct armies within the city engaged in bloody strife with each other.¹ The result of a siege conducted under such unequal conditions could not be doubtful. Titus had the forces of the whole Roman empire behind him. The Jews had no prospect of external aid, and even if they had been united their resistance would have been utterly hopeless. Again and again Titus urged them to yield, and a large peace party existed within the walls which was ready to accept his terms.

¹ 'Tres duces, totidem exercitus.'—Tacitus, *Hist.* b. v. c. 12.

The leaders of the three military factions which occupied Jerusalem were Simon, son of Gioras, John of Gischala, and Eleazar, the commander of the 'Zealots.' For a time they acted together.

But (says Josephus) although they had grown wiser at the first onset the Romans made upon them, this lasted but awhile; for they returned to their former madness and fought it out, and did everything the besiegers could desire them to do. They never suffered anything that was worse from the Romans than they made each other suffer; nor was there any misery endured by the city after these men's actions that could be esteemed new. It was most unhappy before it was overthrown, while those who took it did it the greater kindness. For I venture to affirm that the sedition destroyed the city, and the Romans destroyed the sedition, which it was a much harder thing to do than to destroy the walls.¹

A great part of the city was bounded by rugged and precipitous ravines. Where these natural defences existed there was but one wall, but the rest of the city was protected by three walls. Against these Titus directed his tremendous battering rams, which thundered against the fortifications night and day. Once or twice the besieged Jews made sallies with desperate courage, and slew many of their enemies. But these attempts were mere episodes of the siege, and had no material effect.

As the end approached, the horrors of famine were added. To increase the misery of the Jews the siege occurred at the time of the Passover, when the city was crowded with myriads of non-combatants. One sickens in reading the story of the sufferings of this unhappy people. A great part of the account given by Josephus is too disgusting to be transcribed here; but the following extracts will suffice to indicate the appalling atrocities committed:—

The famine was too hard for all other passions, and destructive to nothing so much as to modesty. What was otherwise worthy of reverence was in this case despised; insomuch that the children pulled the very morsels that their fathers were

¹ *Wars of the Jews*, b. v. c. 6.

eating out of their mouths; and what was still more to be pitied, so did mothers as to their infants. And when those that were most dear were perishing under their hands, they were not ashamed to take from them the very last drops that might preserve their lives.

And while they ate after this manner, yet were they not concealed in so doing; but the seditious everywhere came upon them immediately, and snatched away from them what they had gotten from others. For when they saw any houses shut up, this was to them a signal that the people in them had gotten some food. Whereupon they broke open the doors and ran in and took pieces of what they were eating almost out of their very throats, and this by force. The old men who held their food fast were beaten; and if the women hid what they had in their hands, their hair was torn for so doing. Nor was there any commiseration shown either to the aged or the infants, but they lifted up the children from the ground as they hung upon the morsels they had gotten, and threw them down upon the floor.

After describing certain hideous tortures practised to compel the miserable wretches to confess where they had hidden food, Josephus proceeds:—

These men went also to meet those that had crept out of the city by night as far as the Roman guards, to gather some plants and herbs that grew wild. And when those people thought they had got clear of the enemy, these snatched from them what they had gathered, even while they entreated them, and that by calling on the tremendous name of God, to give them back some part of what they had brought.¹

The poor fugitives, if they escaped from the marauders among their own countrymen, were in danger of being caught by the Roman soldiers. The fate which awaited them in that case is thus described by Josephus in the next chapter:—

The severity of the famine made them bold in thus going out. So that nothing remained but that when they were concealed from the robbers they should be taken by the enemy.

¹ *Wars of the Jews*, b. v. c. 10.

And when they were going to be taken they were forced to defend themselves for fear of being punished. After they had fought they thought it too late to make any supplications for mercy. So they were first whipped, and then tormented with all sorts of tortures before they died, and were then crucified before the walls of the city. This miserable procedure made Titus greatly pity them while they caught every day 500 Jews; nay, some days they caught more. Yet it did not appear safe for him to let loose those that were taken by force.¹

Josephus is frequently eloquent about the clemency of his patron Titus, and the crucifixion of 500 non-combatants daily appears to him justifiable as a matter of policy. As Titus was resolved to reduce the city by famine rather than by storm, he allowed this fearful slaughter of fugitives who fell into the hands of the Romans. In pursuance of the same pitiless design, he caused a wall to be built thirty-nine furlongs in length, which completely encompassed the city, and was patrolled night and day by his legions.² So all hope of escape was cut off from the Jews. Then did the famine widen its progress, and devoured the people by whole houses and families: the upper rooms were full of women and children dying of hunger; the lanes of the city were full of the dead bodies of the aged; the young men wandered about the market-places like shadows, and fell down dead wheresoever their misery seized them. 'Nor,' adds Josephus, 'was there any lamentation made under these calamities, nor were there heard any mournful complaints; but the famine confounded all natural passions. Those who were just going to die looked upon those who were gone to their rest before them with dry eyes and open mouths. *A deep silence also, and a kind of deadly night, had seized upon the city.*'³

At length Titus determined upon an assault, and offered a reward to the first soldier who mounted the walls. A Syrian soldier named Sabinus offered himself for the desperate attempt, and he, with eleven others who followed him, constituted a forlorn hope. Holding their shields above their heads

¹ *Wars of the Jews*, b. v. c. 11.

² *Ib.* b. v. c. 12.

³ *Ib.* c. 12, s. 3.

they marched right up to the walls, amid a shower of darts and stones. Sabinus had almost succeeded in mounting the fortifications when he stumbled against a great stone and fell down headlong. Of course the Jews immediately attacked him. He got upon his knees and, covering himself with his shield, defended himself, and was not slain until he had wounded many of his foes. Three of his comrades were dashed to pieces as they were climbing the wall, and the other eight were carried back wounded to the camp. Two days afterwards another assault was made with better success, and the Romans gained possession of the tower of Antonia, the citadel of Jerusalem.¹

At this crisis Titus commissioned Josephus to offer the Jews terms of capitulation. The daily sacrifice had ceased; the smoke no longer ascended from the altar. Josephus harangued his countrymen from a place where many could hear him, and promised, on behalf of the Roman commander, that if they would lay down their arms the city should be spared and the sacrifice renewed, and he records the eloquent speech, which, according to his own account, he delivered with groans and tears. Many of the higher class were influenced by it, and under the cover of night stole away to the Roman camp, where they were received with a welcome. Among them² were several of the high priests and nobility; but the seditious—as Josephus styles them—rejected the proffered terms, and determined to continue the contest.

The Roman army now destroyed part of the citadel—the Tower of Antonia—and made a broad way to the temple, by which the legions were enabled to approach the first court—the court of the Gentiles. In vain the Jews made a desperate attack upon the Roman guards stationed at the Mount of Olives. The one hope of escape was to break down the terrible wall by which the city was imprisoned. The people were caught in a net and could not break its meshes. The contest advanced higher and higher, creeping slowly but surely to the temple.

And at last the holy place itself was taken. For six days

¹ Josephus, *Wars*, b. vi. c. 1.

² *Ib.* b. vi. c. 2.

together the battering rams thundered against the mighty walls, and the masonry withstood their ceaseless blows.

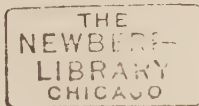
So Titus entered into the tower of Antonia, and resolved to storm the temple the next day early in the morning with his whole army, and to encamp round about the holy house. But as for that house, God had long ago doomed it to the fire. And now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages. It was the tenth day of the month Ab. . . . One of the soldiers, without staying for any orders, and without any concern or dread upon him at so great an undertaking, and being hurried on by a certain divine fury, snatched somewhat out of the materials that were on fire, and being lifted up by another soldier, he set fire to a golden window, through which there was a passage to the rooms that were round about the holy house on the north side of it. . . .

Then did Cæsar, both by calling to the soldiers who were fighting, with a loud voice and by giving a signal to them with his right hand, order them to quench the fire. But they did not hear what he said, though he spake so loud, having their ears dinned by a greater noise. Nor did they attend to the signal he made with his right hand, as still some of them were distracted with fighting, and others with passion. But as for the legions that came running thither, neither any persuasions nor any threatenings could restrain their violence, but each one's own passion was his commander at that time.

And as they were crowding into the temple together, many of them were trampled on by one another, while a great number fell among the ruins of the cloisters—which were still hot and smoking—and were destroyed in the same miserable way with those whom they had conquered.¹

The Jews fought for their temple with the courage of despair, in vain. The dead bodies were heaped up one upon another about the altar. One of the soldiers set fire to the holy house itself; and the treasury, which contained an enormous quantity of money and precious garments, was plundered and burned. The temple and all the surrounding buildings were given up to havoc, fire, and slaughter. The soldiers spared none of their wretched victims, but slew old and young, priests and people, without pity and without

¹ Josephus, *Wars*, b. vi. c. 5.



distinction. As the mighty edifice fell, there went up a shout from the Roman soldiers, and the Jews uttered a cry of despair—a great and exceeding bitter cry—which re-echoed from the surrounding hills.

The deadly work was nearly finished now. The next day the Romans drove the Jewish forces out of the lower city, and set it all on fire, as far as Siloam; but the upper part of the city was so steep that it could not be taken without raising earthworks. When these were finished the Romans brought their battering rams, with which the walls were speedily demolished; and then ensued a scene of carnage similar to that which had occurred at the temple. ‘The whole city,’ says Josephus, ‘ran with blood, to such a degree, indeed, that the fire of many of the houses was quenched with blood.’¹

Titus entirely demolished the rest of the city except the towers, which were left as monuments of his success. He gave orders to slay all that were in arms, but to take the rest alive. A freedman named Fronto was appointed to superintend the massacre.

So this Fronto slew all those that had been seditious and robbers, who were impeached one by another. But of the young men he chose out the tallest and most beautiful, and reserved them for the triumph. And as for the rest of the multitude that were above seventeen years old he put them in bonds, and sent them to the Egyptian mines. Titus also sent a great number into the provinces as a present to them, that they might be destroyed upon their theatres by sword and by wild beasts. But those that were under seventeen years of age were sold for slaves.²

Of the triumph at Rome Josephus has left a glowing description; and he evidently was an eye-witness. During the homeward journey, Titus was received with pomp and pageantry at various cities. At Cæsarea Philippi magnificent shows were exhibited, and, according to the horrible custom of the times, a great number of the captives were destroyed, some being thrown to wild beasts, and others in multitudes forced

¹ Wars, b. vi. c. 9.

² *Ib.*

to kill one another, as if they were enemies.¹ At Berytus, a Roman colony, and other cities along his route, the hideous spectacle was repeated. But the reception at the capital far exceeded all the rest in magnificence. As Titus approached all Rome went out to meet him; and there he received the congratulations and greetings of Vespasian, his father, and Domitian, his brother, amid the tumultuous acclamations of the citizens. On the day appointed for the solemn entry of the victorious general into the city, Vespasian and Titus, crowned with laurel and clothed with purple, were received by the Senate and knights, and marched in procession through the crowded streets. Men clad in purple embroidered with gold carried the costly spoils—vessels of silver and gold, rare works of wrought ivory, splendid purple hangings, precious jewels; and wild animals, horses richly caparisoned, and captives in their gorgeous Oriental garments followed in the train.

Vast pageants were borne along in the procession—lofty structures—on which were depicted various scenes of the war, countries laid waste, squadrons slain, walls overthrown, burning temples.

Moreover, there followed those pageants a great number of ships; and for the other spoils they were carried in great plenty. But those taken in the temple of Jerusalem made the greatest figure of all, that is, the golden table of the weight of many talents, the candlestick also that was made of gold, though its construction was now changed from that which we made use of: for its middle shaft was fixed upon a basis, and the small branches were produced out of it at great length, having the likeness of a trident in their position, and had every one a socket made of brass for lamps at the tops of them. These lamps were in number seven, and represented the dignity of the number seven among the Jews. And the last of all the spoils was carried the Law of the Jews.²

To the right of the Forum, as you go to the Coliseum from the Capitol, stands to this day the triumphal arch of Titus. It is for the English visitor one of the most deeply interesting of the monuments of Rome. Erected shortly after

¹ Josephus, *Wars*, b. vii. c. 2.

² *Ib.* b. vii. c. 5.

the death of Titus, of pure Pentelican marble, this is the most ancient of the triumphal arches now remaining in that city. Part has been reconstructed in modern times; but the central arch is original and the sculptures are in a wonderful state of preservation. The tide of traffic which passes through it from morning to night makes it difficult to examine the basso-relievos; but they illustrate, with marvellous distinctness, the passages just cited from Josephus; and are to this day a monument of his accuracy. The seven-branched golden candlestick, the priests' silver trumpets, and other ornaments of the temple, the manacled captives, and the victorious soldiers, are all there; and notwithstanding the vicissitudes of eighteen centuries, the sculpture retains much of its pristine beauty and vigour. It is said that the modern Roman Jews will never willingly pass under this monument of the final overthrow of their nation.

For the overthrow was final. From that time to this the Jews ceased to be a nation, and have been dispersed all over the world. They dwell in every civilised country among the people, but not of the people: sojourners, sometimes persecuted, sometimes tolerated, they retain always their own customs, their own religion. This their bitterest foes have always allowed in their favour—that the most cruel oppression has not made them renegades from the faith of their fathers. They are, indeed, the most wonderful people on the face of the earth. As for their holy city, it is theirs no longer. Ever since that last tremendous catastrophe it has been the possession of strangers. Once it was 'beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth;' but now, 'the holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem is a desolation.'

CHAPTER VIII.

EASTERN CHURCHES.

THE history of the first Christian churches is intertwined with that of the overthrow of the Jewish nation. But for the sake of clearness it has been considered desirable to keep the two subjects distinct, and to deviate from the strict chronological order of events.

From the date of the Crucifixion to the overthrow of Jerusalem a period of forty years elapsed, 'during which time,' says Eusebius, 'the greater part of the apostles and disciples, James himself the first bishop there, usually called the brother of our Lord, still surviving at Jerusalem, continued the strongest bulwark of the place.'¹

Events momentous in the history of Christianity occurred during those forty years. It will be convenient now to revert to the commencement of that period, and to give some account of the earliest Christian missions.

Some writers endeavour to maintain that the first churches were independent of each other and of any central authority. But this theory is adopted to satisfy preconceived ideas of Church government, and is distinctly contradicted by the New Testament. Nothing can be clearer than that for a long period the apostles and elders at Jerusalem exercised a supervision of the churches in other places. Indeed, it is utterly unreasonable to suppose that—accepting as they did a commission to preach 'unto all nations, beginning from Jerusalem'—they could refrain from co-operation in the work.

It is rather remarkable that the first planting of Christianity outside Jerusalem was not the work of an apostle.

On the death of Stephen 'there arose a great persecution

¹ *Ecc. Hist.*-b. iii. c. 7.

against the Church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout all the regions of Judæa and Samaria *except the apostles*. . . . They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the Word. And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ.¹ Multitudes gave heed to his preaching, and were baptized, both men and women. We have a proof of the heedful care which the apostles exercised over the Church; for when they received news of these events in Samaria, they commissioned two of their number, Peter and John, to visit the new converts, and to perform the rite of laying on of hands.

Philip the deacon continued his missionary journeys, and 'preached in all cities till he came to Cæsarea,'² where some twenty years afterwards he received SS. Paul and Luke into his house as guests.³

. In the Acts of the Apostles S. Luke constantly assumes the unity of the Church, and the members, however widely separated, according to him constitute one body. For instance, he says in one place, 'The Church throughout all Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria had peace.'⁴ Unless we are prepared to deny his historical accuracy, we must conclude that this one body was under the constant supervision of the apostles resident at Jerusalem. S. Paul, about three years⁵ after he embraced the Christian faith, went to Jerusalem and assayed to join himself to the disciples. They regarded with distrust the man who had been the most bitter enemy of Christianity, but Barnabas brought him to the apostles James and Peter, and by them he was cordially received and admitted to daily intercourse. We are expressly told that this visit of S. Paul was a duty or service,⁶ and that after he had fulfilled it he and Barnabas returned to Antioch, taking with them John, surnamed Mark. The visit was not one of friendship or cere-

¹ Acts viii. The authors of the Revised Version of the New Testament read *τὴν πόλιν*, 'the city,' not 'a city.' If their reading is correct, it is probable that Sebaste, the ancient capital of Samaria, is intended. ² Acts viii. 40.

³ Acts xxi. 8.

⁴ This is the correct reading of Acts ix. 31.

⁵ Galatians i. 18; Acts ix. 26.

⁶ *πληρώσαντε τὴν διακονίαν*, Acts xii. 25.

mony. S. Paul considered himself to be under an obligation to present himself to the Church at Jerusalem, and to receive the recognition of the bishop. The reasonable inference is that the primacy of the Jerusalem Church was recognised by the other Christian communities.

To the same effect is the account of the visit of S. Peter to Cæsarea, where for the first time Gentiles were admitted to baptism. When Peter returned to Jerusalem, 'they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised and didst eat with them. But Peter began and expounded the matter unto them in order.'¹ Here, again, we find the apostles and disciples assembled in council, and receiving from one of their colleagues the report of a mission in which he had been engaged, and giving a formal approval of his conduct. After he had concluded his speech, 'and when they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.'²

Indeed, S. Luke's narrative is full of instances of the prompt care and incessant vigilance which the central body at Jerusalem exercised with regard to the new churches which were being rapidly established in surrounding countries. At Antioch a number of Greeks embraced the new faith. 'And the report concerning them came to the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch, who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them.'³

The inference is obvious. The Church at Jerusalem forms a permanent council. To that council a report is made as soon as any addition is made to the number of Christian congregations, and thereupon a member of the council is commissioned to visit and confirm the new disciples.

It would be easy to multiply proofs of the existence of this central authority. For the present it will be sufficient to cite the following example. There was a great famine in the days of Claudius, and 'the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that

¹ Acts xi. 2.² Acts xi. 18.³ Acts xi. 22.

dwelt in Jerusalem: which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.¹ That is to say, the elders at Jerusalem were recognised as the proper body to receive and distribute the alms of various churches.

Jerusalem in those days was the metropolis of Christendom. The persecution² which arose after the death of Stephen had not the effect of driving the apostles from Jerusalem. As Hebrews they were constant in their attendance at the temple, and therefore not so much disliked as the Hellenists or Grecian disciples, against whom the popular anger seems to have been principally directed. But at the time of S. Paul's first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion (A.D. 38), it appears from his own account of that event, that there were only two apostles, SS. James and Peter, in that city, the others probably being engaged in missionary tours.³ Our information respecting their lives is very scanty, but, as will be seen hereafter, enough of their history has been preserved to show that many of them were actively engaged in the diffusion of Christianity in remote regions. The time when they commenced this work is in most cases uncertain; but with respect to two of their number, SS. Peter and John, it is expressly stated that they 'preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans,'⁴ before this visit of S. Paul to Jerusalem.

Three missionary journeys of S. Paul are described in the Acts of the Apostles.⁵ These wonderful expeditions, which had most momentous effects upon the diffusion of Christianity, have been the subjects of profound and minute research by nume-

¹ Acts xi. 29.

² The original word *diakrōsis* means expulsion. Probably the disciples were driven from Jerusalem by popular hostility and ill-treatment.

³ Galatians i. 18.

⁴ Acts viii. 25.

⁵ The following is a brief summary of the principal places visited, and the dates at which the journeys were probably commenced:—

First Journey, with Barnabas and John Mark (A.D. 46): Antioch in Syria, Cyprus, Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Perga, Antioch.

Second Journey, with Silas (A.D. 51): Antioch in Syria, Syria and Cilicia, Derbe and Lystra, Phrygia and Galatia, Mysia, Troas, Neapolis, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Cenchrea, Ephesus, Caesarea (return to Jerusalem), Antioch.

Third Journey, with Timothy (A.D. 54): Antioch in Syria, Galatia and Phrygia, Ephesus, Macedonia, Greece, Philippi, Troas, Miletus, Caesarea, Jerusalem.

rous writers. In the present place only a few particulars of these missions, which illustrate the state of the primitive church, will be noticed.

On each occasion S. Paul started from Antioch in Syria. There were several places which had this name. But the most important of them was the capital of Syria, the third city in rank in the Roman empire—being exceeded in population only by Rome and Alexandria.

It is somewhat remarkable that S. Paul received his ordination and authority to undertake his missionary journeys not from the Church of Jerusalem but from that of Antioch. This does not imply that the latter was independent of the former. On the contrary, the fact that at a later period the presbytery at Jerusalem sent to Antioch among other places ‘decrees for to keep,’¹ shows very clearly that the Church of which S. James was the Bishop exercised a general supervision over other Christian communities.

But though a subordination to the mother church was thus recognised, the presbyters in Antioch, as in other places, had from the earliest days of Christianity authority to perform the rite of ordination by laying on of hands. It is also to be noticed that after this ordination SS. Paul and Barnabas are styled ‘apostles’ in the Acts of the Apostles, and not previously. Their tour occupied one or two years, and during that period Cyprus, Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, and other places were visited. S. Luke has given a very full narrative of this mission, the result of which was a great increase of the number of converts. It is important to notice, with reference to the immediate subject of this chapter, the method adopted by the apostles for organising new churches. ‘And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they had believed.’² The rites appear to have been precisely the same as those with which the two apostles themselves had been ordained at Antioch.

To that city they ultimately returned, and from it, as we have already stated, they proceeded to the Council of Jerusalem,

¹ Acts xvi. 4.

² Acts xiv. 23.

which determined the question of circumcising Gentiles. About a year after that council, S. Paul commenced his second mission, and passing through the region of Phrygia and Galatia,¹ sailed for Europe. Hitherto his ministrations had been confined to Asia; but now European churches are founded. The first of these was at Philippi, a town at the head of the Ægean Sea, near which S. Paul landed in Europe. Thence he proceeded on a tour in Greece, which included Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus, and occupied about two years, of which eighteen months were spent at Corinth.²

From Ephesus S. Paul went to Cæsarea, and thence, it is generally supposed, to Jerusalem again. This is inferred from the brief statement in the Acts, 'And when he had landed at Cæsarea, he went up and saluted the Church.' Some commentators, however, think that this passage merely means that he went up from the ship to the town of Cæsarea.³

However this may be, the apostle speedily returned to Ephesus, where he made a prolonged stay.

And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for the space of two years: so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.⁴

¹ Acts xvi. 6.

² 'He departed from Athens, and came to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome; and he came unto them. And because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought: for by their trade they were tent-makers. . . . And he dwelt there a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them.'—Acts xviii. 1.

³ Acts xviii. 22. Conybeare and Howson, *Life of S. Paul*, chap. xii.

⁴ Acts xix. 8. The phrase *κακολογούντες τὴν ὁδόν* is mistranslated in the Authorised Version, 'spake evil of that way.' S. Luke several times speaks of the Way; see Acts ix. 2 and Acts xix. 23. It is at least probable that this is the 'Way' described in the 'Epistle of Barnabas;' and nearly in the same words in the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the newly discovered 'Teaching of the Apostles.'

After three years' labour at Ephesus, S. Paul took that journey to Jerusalem which resulted in his long imprisonment. The address in which he bade farewell to the beloved Ephesian presbyters is deeply pathetic. One cannot read without emotion the story of his departure from the loving and loved friends who were never to behold his face again—in this world at least. After warning them of the dangers to which they would be exposed, he proceeds :—

Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears. And now I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified. I coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel. Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. In all things I gave you an example how that so labouring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words that he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way unto the ship.¹

As an illustration of S. Paul's authority over the presbyters and of their ready obedience, it may be noticed that he summons them from Ephesus to Miletus, a distance of nearly fifty miles, to this synod.

Of the subsequent visit to Jerusalem and the long imprisonment of the apostle, his appeal to Caesar and consequent deportation to Rome, some account has already been given. At Rome he remained two years in his own hired house, until his appeal came on for hearing. That residence at Rome had momentous consequences for the Christian Church, which will be considered hereafter. For the present purpose we may proceed to show that the appeal was decided in his favour, that he was liberated, and resumed his wonderful missionary enterprises.

¹ Acts xx. 31-38.

The evidence on these points seems quite conclusive. In the first place, S. Paul, in two of his epistles, written and sent from Rome, expresses a confident hope of his release from captivity. Speaking of Timotheus he says, in the Epistle to the Philippians :—

Him, therefore, I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.¹

The apostle here evidently anticipates a speedy hearing of his appeal, and has reason to believe that it will be successful. That the epistle was written from Rome is clear from the concluding salutation from the saints of 'Cæsar's household.'

Again, in the Epistle to Philemon, where he styles himself a prisoner, and refers to his bonds,² he appears so confident of his liberation that he begs Philemon to prepare a lodging for him at Colosse :—

But withal prepare me a lodging ; for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.³

These passages show that S. Paul at the time when he wrote contemplated a speedy departure from Rome and an extensive tour, including Philippi and the churches of the Lycus valley.⁴ When he wrote his First Epistle to Timothy part of the journey had been accomplished, for he says, 'I exhorted thee to tarry in Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia.'

Whether the apostle ever went to Spain is a matter of doubt. Clement, Bishop of Rome, writing about A.D. 95,⁵ says in an often quoted passage :—

Through envy Paul received the prize of patience, having seven times worn chains, having been exiled, having been stoned, having been a herald both in the East and the West, he obtained the glorious report of his faith, having taught the whole world righteousness, and coming to the goal of the West, and having borne his testimony before the rulers, thus he

¹ Philippians ii. 23, 24.

² Philemon 1, 9, 10.

³ Philemon 22.

⁴ Bishop Lightfoot, *Epistles to Colossians and Philemon*, p. 411 note.

⁵ *Ib. S. Clement of Rome*, p. 5.

departed from the world and went to the holy place, being the greatest pattern of patience.¹

Some writers consider that the words here translated 'the goal of the West' mean Spain. But S. Clement, writing at Rome, would regard the regions in which S. Paul spent the greater part of his life as the far East, and therefore might well consider Rome relatively to those regions as the far West. The Greeks habitually called Italy Hesperia—the land of the setting sun; and no doubt the Corinthians, to whom this epistle is addressed, so regarded it. Besides, it is hard to understand how S. Clement could say that S. Paul *came* to the West, if Spain were intended. Surely, if the writer meant that S. Paul went beyond Rome still further westward, it would have been more natural to have said that he *went* to the West. Again, the words 'and coming to the goal of the West, and having borne his testimony before the rulers,' seem to refer to a single event. To suppose that they refer to two distinct events—a journey to Spain and a trial at Rome several years subsequently—is a rather violent assumption. S. Clement apparently speaks of the journey to the West and the bearing witness as connected events. If that be so it follows that Rome is the place to which S. Paul journeyed—for there it was that he bore witness.

The words which have been here translated 'the goal of the West' are by some writers rendered 'the furthest extremity of the West.' But the translation here adopted is literal. The primary meaning of the word *τέρμα* is the goal of a race. In the Greek stadium two pillars were set up to mark the course of foot-races, and the one at the end of the course was designated by this word. That S. Clement uses the word figuratively seems to be shown by the circumstance that in the context of the passage he makes several allusions to the

¹ This is a literal translation. Dr. Lightfoot's text is as follows:—

Διὰ ζῆλον [καὶ ὁ] Παῦλος ὑπομονῆς βραβεῖον ὑπέδειξεν, ἐπτάκις δεσμὰ φορέσας, [φειγὰς] δευθεῖς, λιθασθεῖς, κήρυξ γ' ἐνόμιμος ἐν τε τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἐν τῇ δύσει, τὸ γενναῖον τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ κλέος ἔλαβεν, δικαιοσύνην διδάξας ὅλον τὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δόσεως ἔλθων· καὶ μαρτυρήσας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων, αὕτως ἀπηλλάγη τοῦ κόσμου καὶ εἰς τὸν ἅγιον τόπον ἐπορεύθη, ὑπομονῆς γενόμενος μέγιστος ὑπογραμμός.—*Epistle to the Corinthians*, chap. v.

The letters in brackets are supplied by conjecture, where the MS. is defective,

contests of the stadium. At the commencement of the chapter he speaks of the martyrs as 'athletes;' he says that S. Paul 'obtained the prize,' and states that several female martyrs 'arrived at the fixed goal of faith.'¹ These considerations seem to show that the West to which Clement refers is Rome and not Spain.²

Having thus briefly reviewed the labours of S. Paul in the Eastern Churches, it will be convenient to collect here what is known of the labours of the other apostles in the East; but our information on this subject is remarkably and deplorably scanty, and though we would willingly lift the veil which time has thrown over the work of these first missionaries, with respect to many of them our ignorance is nearly total.

Perhaps more is known about SS. Peter and John than the rest. Of S. Peter, Eusebius says, 'Peter appears to have preached through Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia, to the Jews that were scattered abroad.' This is an inference from the address of the First Epistle of S. Peter,³ which commences as follows, 'Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elected sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.'⁴

The epistle is addressed to sojourners of the Dispersion,

¹ It is remarkable that S. Paul uses the same figure in speaking of his approaching death: 'I have finished the course,' τὸν δρόμον τετέλεκα, 2 Tim. iv. 7. So in 2 Tim. ii. 5. If any one strive as an athlete (ἐὰν δὲ καὶ ἀθλήῃς) he is not crowned unless he strives according to the rules. Similarly, Eusebius styles S. Clement himself as fellow-worker and fellow-athlete (συναθλητής) with S. Paul. — *Eccles. Hist.* b. iii. c. 4.

² It is right to add that the contrary view is adopted by eminent authorities, including Dr. Lightfoot (*Clement of Rome*, p. 50). In what is called the Muratorian Canon, a Latin translation of a Greek document of the second century, there is an obscure allusion to a journey by S. Paul to Spain from Rome—'Profectionem Pauli ab urbe ad Spaniam proficiscentis.' But the writer could not have spoken of his own knowledge, for he wrote a hundred years after S. Paul's death.

³ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, b. iii. cc. 1 and 4.

⁴ 1 Peter i. 1. Πέτρος ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς πόντου, κ.τ.λ. The translation in our Authorised Version: 'Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus,' &c., is incorrect and misleading. The original shows that the epistle was addressed to Jews and not to Gentiles.

which was divided into three great sections—the Babylonian, the Syrian, and the Egyptian, the Babylonian being the oldest, and claiming precedence of the others.¹ It extended through Media, Persia, and Parthia, and in latter times Babylon became one of the most distinguished centres of Talmudical learning.

In addressing the Jews dwelling in the five provinces mentioned at the commencement of the epistle, did S. Peter address people whom he knew, or strangers? We have not absolutely certain knowledge on this point, but there are strong reasons for believing that these five provinces were scenes of S. Peter's labours.

A brief reference to their geography will assist us in the discussion of this question. In the first place they are contiguous to each other, and with the smaller provinces, Cilicia and Pamphylia, constitute that peninsula which we now call Asia Minor. This peninsula is bounded by the Mediterranean, the Ægean, and the Euxine or Black Sea on three sides, and on the fourth adjoins Mesopotamia.

The 'Asia' of the New Testament is not the vast continent which bears that name in modern geography, but merely the western portion of the peninsula just described. In the time of S. Peter this and the other countries mentioned in his epistle were Roman provinces.

Let us next consider the connection of S. Paul with these regions. During his first missionary journey it seems clear that he did not preach in any one of them except Galatia, though he must have passed through the province of Asia to reach Troas, whence he sailed for Europe.²

Now what were the circumstances of S. Paul's preaching in Galatia? That he addressed the Gentiles and not the Jewish settlers is clear from his Epistle to the Galatians. He says to them, 'If ye receive circumcision,'³ Christ will profit you

¹ Westcott, *The Bible in the Church*, chap. i.

² 'Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.'—Acts xvi. 6-8.

³ ἂν περιέμνησθε, Galatians v. 2.

nothing ;' and again, he speaks of certain men 'who desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.'¹ The general object of the epistle is a remonstrance against Judaising teaching, and an admonition to the converts not to submit to Jewish ordinances. S. Paul would not advise his converts against circumcision if they were circumcised already.

It is clear then that so far as his first missionary journey was concerned, he had not preached to those to whom the Epistle of Peter is directed. The same observation is in the main correct with respect to the other journeys of the Apostle of the Gentiles. It is true that he did preach at some places on the sea coast of Asia, but not in the interior of that province.

We arrive then at this conclusion, that the 'sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythynia,' to whom S. Peter directed his epistle, were not the persons among whom S. Paul laboured. This was precisely in accordance with the arrangement that S. Peter should preach to the circumcision and S. Paul to the Gentiles.²

These considerations do not of themselves conclusively establish the inference that S. Peter preached in the five provinces named in his epistle, but they render it highly probable that he did so. It may be reasonably asked—Why should he select those particular places in the address of his letter, unless he had some special interest in them? It is impossible to suggest any reason for this special mention then unless they were under his care. Tradition points to the same conclusion. Origen says, he 'appears' to have preached in these provinces.³ The 'Apostolic Constitutions'⁴ state positively that he did so. The latter authority is one which must be received with caution: still it is evidence of a very ancient belief that these regions were visited by the apostle.

At the end of the epistle he sends salutations from Babylon: 'The Church that is at Babylon, elected together

¹ Galatians vi. 13.

² 'James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision.'—Galatians ii. 9.

³ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, b. iii. c. 1.

⁴ *Apostolic Constitutions*, b. viii. c. 4.

with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.'¹ This is from the Authorised Version; the words 'the Church' being printed in italics to show that there are no corresponding Greek words in the text adopted by the translators. But in the Codex Sinaiticus, a manuscript of the fourth century, which was discovered in 1859, the word for 'Church' occurs. It also appears in the Peschito or Syriac Version, which was made early in the second century. This evidence in favour of the insertion of the word 'Church' is overwhelming.²

S. Peter, in his epistle, sends salutations from Babylon, and therefore was or had been at that place. But the meaning of the word 'Babylon' has been much discussed. Some theologians have thought the apostle used the word metaphorically for Rome. For this conclusion two arguments are adduced. First, it is said that S. Mark was in Rome when the epistle was written, and as S. Peter refers to him as sending salutations, it follows that S. Peter himself must have been at Rome also. But how do we know that S. Mark was in Rome when the epistle was written? The date of the epistle is not known.³ The statement that the S. Mark here mentioned was in Rome when S. Peter wrote is an assumption for which not a tittle of historical evidence is adduced.

The second argument in support of the theory that 'Babylon' means Rome is based on a supposition that at the time when S. Peter wrote the Jews had all left Babylon.⁴ This is inferred from an account given by Josephus of a migration of Jews from Babylon in the reign of Caligula. But it is not stated that they *all* left Babylon at that time: on the contrary, Josephus adds that there was a fresh migration five years afterwards.⁵ There is a passage in another work of the same author, written about the year A.D. 100,

¹ 1 Peter v. 13.

² 'The elect church which is in Babel, asketh for your peace, and Markos my son.'—Etheridge, *The Apostolical Acts and Epistles from the Peschito*, p. 420.

³ Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion that S. Peter wrote his epistle in the interval between S. Paul's first captivity at Rome and his death.—*Commentary on Colossians*, p. 41.

⁴ Dr. Döllinger (*First Age of the Church*) says there were no Jews in Babylon when S. Peter wrote; but this statement is certainly erroneous.

⁵ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xviii. c. 9.

which shows beyond doubt that there was at that time a large Hebrew population in Babylon. Speaking of the practice of preserving genealogies of priests, he says, 'This is our practice not only in Judæa, but wherever any body of men of our nation do live: and even there an exact catalogue of our priests' marriages are kept; I mean at Egypt and at Babylon, or in any other place of the rest of the habitable earth, whithersoever our priests are scattered.'¹ To the like effect may be cited the Preface to the 'Wars of the Jews,' in which Josephus states that he had written a history of those wars and of the destruction of Jerusalem for the information of 'the Parthians, and the Babylonians, and the remotest Arabians, and those of our nation beyond the Euphrates.'²

Lastly, there is a statement of Philo, a contemporary of Josephus, which proves beyond doubt the Jews continued to reside in Babylon at the period in question. Speaking of countries beyond the Euphrates, Philo says, 'All of them, except a very small portion, and Babylon, and all the satrapies around, which have any advantages of soil or climate, have Jews settled in them.'³

It is easy to see how the tidings of Christianity reached Babylon long before S. Peter wrote his epistle. At the festivals of the Jewish Church people from beyond the Euphrates flocked to the holy city, and among them must have been inhabitants of Babylon. Josephus expressly states that in the time of Herod there were great numbers of Jews in Babylon, and among them were resident high priests.⁴ And S. Luke states that among those who embraced Christianity at the Day of Pentecost were 'dwellers in Mesopotamia.'⁵ There cannot be any reasonable doubt that these on their return established Christian congregations in the chief city of that region.

¹ *Against Apion*, b. i. s. 7. In the second century of our own era there were flourishing schools of Jewish philosophy in Babylon.—See Milman's *History of the Jews*, chap. xix.

² *Wars of the Jews*, Preface, s. 2.

³ *Philo de Legat.* 36. This was written in the reign of Caligula.

⁴ *Antiquities*, b. xv. c. 2, ss. 2 and 4.

⁵ Acts ii. 9. The word Mesopotamia is used by ancient geographers to denote all the countries between the Tigris and the Euphrates.

What motive could S. Peter have in using the word 'Babylon' to mean some other place? There is no attempt to conceal the place of his sojourn, for he names Mark, which he would not have done had he wished to preserve a secret. Neither does he speak rhetorically. In the Apocalypse, which abounds with metaphors, the use of the word Babylon to denote Rome is natural enough; but in such a simple matter as the usual salutations at the end of a letter, metaphor is utterly out of place.

We may safely conclude that when Peter sent to the Churches of Asia Minor the salutations of the co-elected¹ Church at Babylon, he meant what he said; and that he had established a church in that city, as well as in the neighbouring provinces of Asia Minor.

S. Peter also established the Church of Antioch. Eusebius² says that Ignatius, 'who is celebrated by many even to this day as the successor of Peter at Antioch, was the second who obtained the episcopal office there.' This expression, however, does not imply that S. Peter was *Bishop* of Antioch; for the historian distinctly states that Evodius was the first bishop of that city.³

The relations of this apostle to the Church in Rome will be considered in another chapter.

With respect to the labours of other apostles among the Eastern Churches our information is very scanty. That they were engaged in missionary journeys is beyond doubt; but of the particulars of those journeys we know but little. S. James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, remained there until his martyrdom, which took place shortly before the siege. Immediately before that event the whole body of the Church at Jerusalem withdrew from the city, and dwelt at Pella, beyond the river Jordan.⁴

In a passage already quoted, Eusebius states that—

After the martyrdom of James and the capture of Jerusalem, which immediately followed, it is reported that those of

¹ Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion that the word *συνεκλεκτή*, here translated 'co-elected,' denotes election to Church membership.—*Epistle to Colossians*, p. 286.

² Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, b. iii. c. 5.

³ *Ibid.* b. iii. c. 22.

⁴ *Ibid.* b. iii. c. 5.

the apostles and the disciples of our Lord that were yet surviving came together from all parts, with those that were related to our Lord according to the flesh. For the greater part of them were yet living. These consulted together to determine whom it was proper to pronounce worthy of being the successor of James. They all unanimously declared Simeon the son of Clopas, of whom mention is made in the sacred volume as worthy of the episcopal seat there.¹

Eusebius does not give his authority for this statement; but he had access to documents no longer extant, and his general accuracy is indisputable. In one respect he is corroborated by the 'Apostolic Constitutions,' which state that Simeon the son of Clopas succeeded James as Bishop of Jerusalem.² The statement is inherently probable. It would be quite consistent with the care the apostles had exercised over the Church in that city, that on the death of the chief minister they should assemble to appoint his successor.

We may now refer to the Churches of other apostles. Of S. John more is known than of the rest. It is well ascertained that he lived to a great age in Asia, and died at Ephesus. Irenæus, who was born in the earlier part of the second century, writes with reference to the doctrine of the Church as follows: 'And all the presbyters of Asia that had conferred with John the disciple of our Lord testify that John had delivered it to them, for he continued until the time of Trajan.' In another place, the same writer speaks of 'the Church in Ephesus also, which had been founded by Paul, and where John continued to abide until the time of Trajan, is a faithful witness to the apostolic tradition.'³ Origen also says that John having lived long in Asia died at Ephesus; and Polycrates, who was Bishop of Ephesus towards the close of the second century, states that John was buried in that city.

The authorship of the Apocalypse will be considered in another chapter.

But whatever doubt there may exist upon this point there is no dispute that the book was written before the close of the first century. It refers to a cruel persecution at Rome, which

¹ *Ecclesiastical History*, b. iii. c. 11. ² *Apostolic Constitutions*, b. vii. s.

³ Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, b. ii. c. 22; b. iii. c. 3.

is called Babylon.¹ There were only two general persecutions of Christians at Rome in the first century, one in the reign of Nero, the other in that of Domitian. Commentators have been much divided in opinion as to which persecution is referred to. The testimony of Irenæus (about A.D. 177) is express and distinct. He says, 'We therefore do not venture to affirm anything with certainty respecting the name of Antichrist. For were it necessary that his name should be announced to the present age, it would have been declared by him who saw the revelation. For it has not been long since it was seen but almost in our own generation, about the end of Domitian's reign.'

The arguments for the earlier date are founded on internal evidence—which, however, is always far more liable to error than historical testimony. The statement of Irenæus is so direct, he lived so near the times of which he is speaking, and his accuracy is so great, that it may be safely concluded that the Apocalypse was written after the Domitian persecution, that is, a few years before the close of the first century.²

For the purposes of the present chapter, however, the decision of this question is not very material. The Apocalypse is here cited for historical purposes only, and it shows this, at all events, that some time before the close of the first century there were seven churches in Asia Minor, which had been so long established that each had a history of its own. With respect to some of them we have very little information; but with respect to others some very interesting particulars have been preserved, which throw much light on the organisation of Christian Churches in the first century.

1. *Ephesus*.—The first church addressed in the Apocalypse is that of Ephesus, the magnificent capital of Ionia, where

¹ 'And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all that were slain upon earth.'—Rev. xviii. 18.

The Babylon of the Apocalypse is evidently the Rome of the Cæsars. The notion that the writer refers to mediæval or modern Rome has sprung up in modern times. There is not a trace of it in ancient writers, and the opinion is so silly as to be hardly worth serious notice. Chapter xvii. shows that a city is intended which had a large commerce. This was the case with imperial Rome; but afterwards the commerce became quite insignificant.

² This is the conclusion of Dr. Lardner, after a most elaborate investigation. —*History of Apostles*, chap. xxii.

stood the Temple of Diana, one of the wonders of the world. This church had been peculiarly under the care of S. Paul. He had preached there on his way to Jerusalem (about A.D. 54), and had subsequently resided there for a period of two years, arguing daily in the lecture room of Tyrannus.¹ S. Paul appointed Timothy first Bishop of Ephesus. From the words in the First Epistle to Timothy, 'As I besought thee to abide in Ephesus when I went into Macedonia,' it has been inferred that the appointment of Timothy to the Church at Ephesus was merely temporary. But the sentence is obviously incomplete, and the words 'so I do now,' or some such words, must be supplied.² That it was the intention of the apostle that Timothy should remain at Ephesus seems clear from the general tenor of the epistle, in which minute instructions are given as to the conduct of public prayers, and advice as to the way in which Timothy should behave in his bishopric. S. Paul tells him that he hopes to see him shortly; but meanwhile instructs him as to the way in which he should demean himself in the house of God as a pillar and minister of the truth.³ Then he gives rules respecting the ordination of presbyters, and regulations for registering widows,⁴ and other matters of Church government. All this is quite inconsistent with the idea that the appointment of Timothy was a merely temporary arrangement. On the contrary, the apostle evidently contemplates a long continuance of the episcopate of his disciple.

The Second Epistle to Timothy is written in a very different tone. S. Paul is a second time a prisoner at Rome, expecting a speedy condemnation to death. In urgent language he begs Timothy to come to him; and—it already has been observed—there is reason to think the request was complied with. This at least is clear from the conclusion of the

¹ διαλεγόμενος ἐν τῇ σχολῇ Τυράννου, Acts xix. 9.

² These words are supplied in the Revised Version of the New Testament; also in the *Life of S. Paul*, by Conybeare and Howson, chap. xxvii.

³ 1 Tim. iii.

⁴ καταλεγέσθω, 1 Tim. v. 9. The word has the same origin as our word 'catalogue,' and means to be registered or placed on a list. This may be either a list of widows to receive alms, or a list of deaconesses. In either case it is evidence of a systematic management of the affairs of the Church.

Epistle to the Hebrews, that at some time or other Timothy was a prisoner in Italy and afterwards was liberated.

He probably returned to his diocese. Eusebius expressly says he was Bishop of Ephesus, and evidently speaks of him as a permanent bishop.¹

After his death the next bishop appears to have borne the name of John, and to have been appointed by the Apostle John.² Ignatius, writing early in the second century, says that Onesimus was bishop in his time.³ Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus at the end of the second century, says that he had had seven predecessors, and regards this long series of bishops as an honourable distinction of that church.⁴ There cannot be any doubt that after the death of Timothy there was an uninterrupted episcopal succession.

S. John the Apostle, as we said, resided long at Ephesus, died and was buried there; but, as will be more particularly shown hereafter, his position was not that of a diocesan bishop, but a chief ruler and guide of the Churches of Asia Minor.

2. *Smyrna*.—The second church mentioned in the Apocalypse is that of Smyrna—scarcely less illustrious than that of Ephesus; for the Bishop of Smyrna was the noble martyr Polycarp, one who had conversed with the disciples of Christ, and had received instruction from the Apostle John himself. Irenæus says of him, ‘Well could I describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp sat and taught, his going out and coming in, the whole tenor of his life, his personal appearance, the discourses which he made to the people. How would he speak of the conversations which he had with John and

¹ *Eccl. Hist.* b. iii. c. 4. ‘Timothy is recorded (*ιστορεῖται*) as having first received the episcopate at Ephesus, as Titus also was appointed over the Churches in Crete.’

² *Apostolic Constitutions*, b. vii. c. 46. The historical value of this collection will be considered hereafter. Papias, who was a companion of Polycarp, and contemporary with the Apostle John, says that there was at Ephesus another John, a presbyter. Eusebius, after referring to this statement, adds: ‘So that it is here proved that the statement of those is true who assert that there were two of the same name in Asia, that there were two tombs in Ephesus, and that both are called John to this day.’ Papias states that he himself was a hearer of the Presbyter John.—See Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. iii. c. 39.

³ Ignatius, *Epistle to Ephesians*, s. 1.

⁴ Quoted by Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. v. c. 24.

with others who had seen the Lord! How did he make mention of their words, and of whatsoever he had heard from them respecting the Lord!'¹ Whether Polycarp was Bishop of Smyrna when the Apocalypse was written we cannot tell certainly, but he must have been Bishop of that diocese not long afterwards; for he 'received the episcopate of the Church at Smyrna at the hands of the eye-witnesses and servants of the Lord.'² He must, at all events, have been connected with the Church there when the Apocalypse was written; for he was ordained deacon and catechist of that Church by Bucolus, his predecessor in the bishopric. We may well believe that Polycarp read with joy and gratitude the words of unmingled praise addressed to the converts among whom he had faithfully laboured: 'I know thy works and tribulation and poverty; but thou art rich;' and the promise added, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' This testimony of the Apocalypse is confirmed a few years later by Ignatius, a contemporary of Irenæus, who, in a letter to the Smyrneans, which has been preserved, addresses them as 'a church blessed with every good gift,' and adds, 'I have observed that ye are settled in an immoveable faith, nailed as it were to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, both in the flesh and in the spirit.'³

The Church of Smyrna appears to have been founded not long after that of Philippi; for Polycarp, writing from Smyrna to the Philippians, and referring to the Apostle Paul, says, 'He glories of you in all the churches which alone then had known him; for we had not yet known him.'⁴ This expression seems to indicate that a church was established at Smyrna not long after the time when S. Paul preached to the Philippians.

What a history is that of Smyrna! Seven centuries before the Christian era she was a flourishing centre of commerce. She was extolled by ancient writers as the crown of Ionia and jewel of Asia. Her streets were adorned with magnificent edifices. Her harbour, one of the most capacious in Europe, was busy with export of costly merchandise. When Smyrna

¹ Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. v. c. 20.

² *Ib.* b. iii. c. 36.

³ *Epistle to Smyrneans*, s. 1. This epistle seems to have been written at later than A.D. 116.

⁴ *Polycarp to the Philippians*, s. 11.

became a Roman city it was, as it still is, the chief seat of the trade of the Levant. Other cities addressed in the Apocalypse have perished utterly or fallen into decay; but Smyrna retains her commercial pre-eminence to this day. Her harbour is crowded as in ancient times with merchantmen, and her streets are thronged by a motley busy throng of Turks, Jews, and Europeans.

3. *Pergamos*.—The third in the Apocalyptic list of churches is that of Pergamos, another magnificent city of Asia Minor. Two centuries before the Christian era the state of Pergamos flourished under Attalus, an ally of the Romans, and a patron of arts and literature. The city was renowned in ancient times for its temples and the possession of a library second in magnitude to that of Alexandria only. The last of the princes of Pergamos bequeathed that city (B.C. 133) to the Romans, and it became the capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor.¹ Of the ecclesiastical history of Pergamos we know but little beyond what is stated in the Book of Revelation—that the early church had been subject to persecution, and that a disciple named Antipas had suffered martyrdom.

There is a curious passage in Tacitus with reference to Pergamos, which illustrates the state of society in Asia Minor in the first century of Christianity. A multitude of cities claimed the privilege called the right of asylum.² Certain temples, altars, and groves possessed the right of protecting slaves, debtors, and criminals who fled to them for refuge. This privilege was so much abused that the Senate (about the year A.D. 22) determined to limit it. The consuls, who were directed to examine the muniments and records of cities of Asia Minor which claimed the right of asylum, reported that the temple of Æsculapius at Pergamos was an ascertained asylum, but that the claims of others were obscured by antiquity.³

The town of Pergamos, now called Bergama, still possesses some of its ancient importance as a seat of commerce, and contains extensive ruins and remains of the finest Greek art.

¹ In the Apocalypse it is called the throne of Satan (*ὁ θρόνος τοῦ Σατάνᾳ*), possibly with reference to this circumstance.

² 'Jus asyli.' There was a similar privilege in the cities of refuge under the Mosaic law.

³ Tacitus, *Ann.* iii. 63.

4. *Thyatira*.—The most important towns of ancient Ly^dia were Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia. The Roman road from Pergamos to Sardis passed through Thyatira, noted for its dye-works, an industry continued to the present time. Large quantities of scarlet cloth are still sent thence to Smyrna. St. Luke speaks of 'a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God.' It has been conjectured that the influence of Lydia may have contributed to the establishment of a church at Thyatira. There are Christian communities there to this day.

5. *Sardis* was the capital of the ancient Lydian monarchy, and was situated on the river Pactolus. Under the Romans it was the seat of separate provincial government. Tacitus states that about the year A.D. 17 twelve populous cities of Asia Minor were destroyed by an earthquake, which happened in the night, and that Sardis suffered the most severely from this calamity. The Roman Emperor and Senate resolved to send relief to these cities by grants of money and exemption from taxes for a period of five years.¹ It seems to have been rebuilt with great splendour.

Like other cities mentioned in the Apocalypse, Sardis had a long history. Upwards of five centuries before the Christian era it was taken by Cyprus, and was then considered one of the most opulent cities in the world. Now it is a miserable village, but vast heaps of ruins attest its ancient magnificence.

6. *Philadelphia* was another great town of Lydia, and one of those which suffered by the earthquake just mentioned. It was second in rank to Sardis, but not nearly so ancient, for it was built by Attalus Philadelphus less than two centuries before the Christian era. About the year B.C. 133 it came under the dominion of the Romans. It is still a town of some importance, containing about 15,000 inhabitants.

7. *Laodicea*, at the time when the Apocalypse was written, was the residence of the Roman governors. It was a city of Phrygia, situated upon the river Lycus. It is now quite deserted, but the ruins are very extensive, and there are considerable remains of large public edifices.

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, b. ii. c. 48.

The Church in Laodicea existed in the time of the Apostle Paul, and probably was established by him. At the end of the Epistle to the Colossians he says, 'Salute the brethren in Laodicea, and Nymphas, with the Church in his house. And when this epistle has been read among you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from the Laodiceans.'¹

It is clear from this passage that the Laodiceans were in possession of a letter from the apostle;² but the words '*from the Laodiceans*' may refer to an epistle not originally addressed to them, but merely lent to them. In another part of the Epistle to the Colossians, S. Paul says, 'I would have you know how greatly I strive for you and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as I have not seen after the flesh.' Are we to infer from this phrase that the Colossians and Laodiceans are included among those whom the apostle had not seen? Or does he mean to draw a distinction between the Colossians and Laodiceans whom he had seen and others whom he had not seen? The latter interpretation seems far the most probable. Laodicea was the capital of Phrygia and Colossæ one of its most important towns. S. Paul visited that country

¹ Colossians iv. 15. The words in the Authorised Version, 'when this epistle is read among you,' are a mistranslation, and obscure the meaning.

² It is supposed, that this letter was a copy of a circular letter addressed to the Ephesians and others, and now bearing the name of the Epistle to the Ephesians.—Lightfoot, *Colossians*, p. 37. Another theory is that the epistle inscribed 'to the Ephesians' was taken by Tychicus to Ephesus, with an order to forward it to Laodicea, and thence to Colossæ.—Lardner, *Hist. of Apostles*, chap. xiii.

There is another argument in favour of the theory of a circular letter which does not seem to have been hitherto noticed.

In his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. i. 4) S. Paul says: 'We ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith.'

Polycarp, in his *Epistle to the Philippians*, speaks of them as men 'among whom the blessed Paul laboured, and who are named in the beginning of his epistle. For he glories of you in all the churches.'

Now in the epistle which in our New Testament is entitled 'to the Philippians,' there is not any statement to the effect that S. Paul gloried of them in all the churches. But in the Epistle to the Thessalonians there is such a statement. Thessalonica and Philippi were both towns of Macedonia, and it seems to be a probable inference that the same letter was addressed to both, the address only being altered. If this be so it is an additional instance of circular epistles addressed by S. Paul to neighbouring towns.

twice. On the first occasion¹ he may have passed rapidly through that region. But on the second occasion he made a complete and systematic visitation of the churches. S. Luke emphatically states that after spending some time at Antioch, S. Paul 'departed and went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, stablishing all the disciples.' This language seems totally inconsistent with the theory that he omitted to visit Colossæ and Laodicea. How could the apostle be said to have gone through the region 'in order,'² if these two important places were left unvisited? How could he be described as stablishing 'all' the disciples, if two of the principal churches did not receive his ministrations? Unless we do a violence to the language of S. Luke—for which there is not any need—we must suppose that the apostle included Colossæ and Laodicea in his missionary tour.³

After the death of S. Paul the Apostle, John succeeded to the care of the churches mentioned in the Apocalypse. An interesting question arises as to the nature of his relations to those churches. He could not have been a bishop or resident chief minister of a diocese; for others occupied that office at Ephesus, where he resided; and the very fact that he resided at Ephesus shows that he could not have been a bishop elsewhere. His relation to the seven churches is very clearly described by a writer of great authority, Clement of Alexandria, who was born in the second century. He states that after the death of the tyrant Domitian, S. John returned from Patmos to Ephesus, and went about 'the neighbouring regions of the Gentiles—in some to appoint bishops, in some to institute entirely new churches, in others to appoint to the ministry.'⁴

Clement has a narrative respecting the apostle which illustrates in a remarkable manner the state of the Christian communities in those days. The story may not be correct in

¹ 'They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia,' Acts. xvi. 6. It should be 'through,' not 'throughout,' as in the Authorised Version.

² *καθεξῆς* = 'in successive order,' Acts xviii. 23.

³ This is the opinion of Dr. Lardner, who, in his *History of the Apostles*, has discussed the question at great length.

⁴ Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. iii. c. 23.

every particular. The writer may have added some embellishments of his own; but this circumstance ought not to induce us to reject the narrative altogether. That in the main it is correct there is no reason to doubt. Clement is a writer of great repute; and he prefaces this account with a most solemn declaration of its accuracy. His narrative, as quoted by Eusebius, is as follows:—

Listen to a story which is no fiction but a real history, handed down and carefully preserved, respecting the Apostle John. For after the tyrant was dead, coming from the isle of Patmos to Ephesus, he went also when called to the neighbouring regions of the Gentiles; in some to appoint bishops, in some to institute entirely new churches, in others to appoint to the ministry some one of those who were pointed out by the Holy Ghost.

When he came, therefore, to one of those cities at no great distance, of which some also give the name, and had in other respects consoled his brethren, he at last turned to the bishop ordained, and seeing a youth of fine stature, graceful countenance, and ardent mind, he said, 'I commend him to you with all earnestness, in the presence of the Church and of Christ.' The bishop having promised all, he repeated and testified the same thing, and then returned to Ephesus.

The presbyter, taking the youth home that was committed to him, educated, restrained, and cherished him, and at length baptized him. After this he relaxed exercising his former care and vigilance, as if he had now committed him to a perfect safeguard in the seal of the Lord.

But certain idle, dissolute fellows, familiar with every kind of wickedness, unhappily attached themselves to him thus prematurely freed from restraint. At first they led him on by expensive entertainments. Then going out at night to plunder they took him with them. Next they encouraged him to something greater, and gradually becoming accustomed to their ways, in his enterprising spirit, like an unbridled and powerful steed that has struck out of the right way, biting the curb, he rushed with so much the greater impetuosity towards the precipice.

At length, renouncing the salvation of God, he contemplated no trifling offence, but having committed some great crime, since he was now ruined he expected to suffer equally with the rest. Taking, therefore, these same associates, and forming

them into a band of brigands, he became their captain, surpassing them all in violence, blood, and cruelty.

Time elapsed, and on a certain occasion they sent for John. The apostle, after ordering those other matters for which he came, said, 'Come, bishop, return me my deposit which I and Christ committed to thee in the presence of the Church over which thou dost preside.' The bishop at first indeed was confounded, thinking that he was insidiously charged for money which he had not received. And yet he could neither give credit for that which he had not, nor yet disbelieve John.

But when he said I demand the young man and the soul of a brother, the old man, groaning heavily and also weeping, said, 'He is dead!'

'How, and by what death?'

'He is dead to God,' said he. 'He has turned out wicked and abandoned, and at last a brigand. And now, instead of the Church, he has beset the mountains with a band like himself.'

The apostle on hearing this tore his garment, and beating his head, with great lamentation said, 'I left a worthy keeper of a brother's soul! But let a horse be got ready, and some one to guide me on my way.' He rode, as he was, away from the Church, and coming to the country was taken prisoner by the out-guards of the brigands. He neither attempted to flee nor refused to be taken, but cried out, 'For this very purpose am I come: conduct me to your captain.'

He in the meantime stood waiting, armed as he was. But when he recognised John coming to him, overcome with shame he turned about to flee. The apostle, however, pursued him with all his might, forgetful of his age, and crying out, 'Why dost thou fly, my son, from me thy father—thy defenceless, aged father? Have compassion on me my son: fear not. Thou still hast hope of life. I will intercede with Christ for thee. Should it be necessary I will cheerfully suffer death for thee as Christ for us. I will give my life for thine. Stay: believe that Christ hath sent me.'

Hearing this he at first stopped with downcast looks, then threw away his arms: then trembling lamented bitterly, and embracing the old man as he came up, attempted to plead for himself with his lamentations as much as he was able; as if baptized a second time with his own tears, and only concealing his right hand. But the apostle, pledging himself and solemnly assuring him that he had found pardon for him in his prayers at the hands of Christ, praying on his bended knees

and kissing his right hand, as cleansed from all iniquity, conducted him back again to the Church.¹

That S. John abode for a long time in Ephesus and governed the Asiatic Churches, and that he died there in extreme old age, we have satisfactory evidence. Eusebius says (referring to the close of the first century):—

About this time, also, the beloved disciple of Jesus, John, the apostle and evangelist, still surviving governed the Churches in Asia, after his return from exile on the island and the death of Domitian. That he was living until this time it may suffice to prove by two witnesses. These, as maintaining sound doctrine in the Church, may surely be regarded as worthy of all credit, and such were Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria.²

Another apostle who settled in Asia after the fall of Jerusalem was Philip of Bethsaida. Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, in a letter written to Victor, Bishop of Rome, about the end of the second century, says: 'For in Asia also mighty luminaries are fallen asleep, which shall rise again at the last day at the appearance of the Lord, when He shall come with glory from heaven, and shall gather again all the saints; Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who sleeps in Hierapolis, and his two aged virgin daughters; and another of his daughters, who lived in the Holy Ghost, rest at Ephesus.'³

Hierapolis, at which S. Philip resided, was a city of Phrygia, about five miles distant from Laodicea, and after the destruction of Jerusalem became one of the principal Christian settlements. There must have been a church there in

¹ Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* b. iii. c. 23.

² *Ib.* Eusebius then proceeds to quote the passages from Irenæus and Clement, already given in this chapter, which relate to the sojourn of S. John at Ephesus.

³ *Ib.* b. iii. c. 31. That the Philip here mentioned is not Philip the evangelist mentioned by S. Luke (Acts xxi. 8) is demonstrated by Dr. Routh (*Reliquiæ*, vol. i. p. 378) and Dr. Lightfoot (*Epistle to Colossians*, p. 46), who show very clearly that Philip of Hierapolis was the apostle, and not the evangelist. The testimony of Polycrates on this point is positive, and he had, as Bishop of Ephesus, good means of information. Besides that, Philip the Evangelist, according to Hieronymus, lived and died at Cæsarea, where S. Paul and S. Luke had visited him.

the time of the Apostle Paul, for in the Epistle to the Colossians, speaking of Epaphras, he says: 'I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.'¹

Of the history of the other apostles, subsequently to the fall of Jerusalem, very little is known with certainty. There are numerous traditions respecting them, but the writings in which they are recorded are very rarely older than the third or fourth century. Some of them may be true; others are certainly untrue; and we have no satisfactory means of discerning the true from the untrue. Eusebius says,² that after the fall of Jerusalem 'the holy apostles and disciples of our Saviour being scattered over the whole world, Thomas, according to tradition, received Parthia³ as his allotted region, Andrew received Scythia, and John Asia, where, after continuing some time, he died at Ephesus.' The same writer refers to a tradition that S. Bartholomew went to 'India,' and that a century afterwards Pantænus, a learned missionary, went to the same country, and 'found his own arrival anticipated by some who were there acquainted with the Gospel of Matthew, and to whom Bartholomew had preached, and had left them the same Gospel in Hebrew, which was also preserved unto this time.'⁴

It is doubtful what country is meant here by 'India.' Some writers suppose that it means Southern Arabia. Evidently it must have been some country in which Jews were settled; for the Gospel of S. Matthew in Hebrew would not be intelligible to any other people.

¹ Colossians iv. 13.

² Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* b. iii. c. 1.

³ The tradition that S. Thomas preached in Parthia receives some confirmation from a passage in the *Recognition of Clement*, a kind of religious romance, written probably before A.D. 230. The writer speaks of Thomas preaching among the Parthians, b. ix. c. 29. Of course a work of fiction has not much historical value, but the date of this work shows that the tradition respecting S. Thomas was very ancient.

In his *Evangelic Preparation*, Eusebius has preserved a fragment of Bardesanes, which speaks of the wide diffusion of Christianity in Parthia in his times. Bardesanes, according to Eusebius (*Eccles. Hist.* b. iv. c. 30), was a writer of the latter part of the second century.

⁴ Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* b. v. c. 10.

How far east the missionary labours of the apostles extended it would be impossible now to determine with certainty. But that tidings of Christianity were carried eastward at a very early period is beyond doubt. Even before the death of Christ we are told that 'the report of Him went forth into all Syria.'¹ And it is easy to see how that report would be conveyed. At the three great festivals of the Jewish Church myriads of faithful Jews flocked to Jerusalem from countries far to the east of Syria; and they at their return home would naturally report that a new Teacher was preaching throughout all Judæa with mighty influence, and stirring up the people. Accordingly we find that churches were established in Syria very soon after the apostles began their work; for among those to whom the decree of the Council of Jerusalem was addressed were the brethren in Syria.²

But far beyond them the rumour of the new faith extended. For, as we have seen, among the pilgrims to Jerusalem at the three great feasts were many that came from regions beyond the Euphrates.³ And these on their return home would communicate the tidings of Christianity throughout Mesopotamia. Among converts at the Day of Pentecost were dwellers in that region, and it cannot be reasonably doubted that when S. Peter reached Babylon he found Christian congregations already established there.

Another Church of Mesopotamia which has a remarkable history is Edessa, of which the modern name is Urfa or Orfa, a town situated on one of the great high roads from Syria to India, which is at this day a thriving populous place, containing about 50,000 inhabitants. Along the caravan road which passes through Orfa vast quantities of goods are conveyed between India, Syria, and Asia Minor. In ancient times, also, Edessa was an important commercial centre, and one of the gateways of the East. There were Jews resident at Edessa who traded in silk, and a Latin historian⁴ of the fourth century states that a celebrated mart

¹ Matthew iv. 24.

² Acts xv. 23.

³ *Ante*, Chapter V.

⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus, cited in Cureton's *Ancient Syriac Documents*, p. 156.

was held at Batne, about a day's march from Edessa, where traders came to buy and sell various kinds of merchandise sent by the Indians and Seres.¹

The Jews settled at Edessa soon heard of Christianity. The history of the establishment of a church among them has been obscured by fables, but the main fact that there was such a church in Apostolic times hardly admits of doubt. Eusebius says that 'Thomas, one of the twelve apostles, by a divine impulse sent Thaddeus, who was also one of the seventy disciples, to Edessa as a herald and evangelist of the doctrines of Christ.'²

This statement contains nothing improbable. But unfortunately the historian himself gives it an appearance of improbability by stating that the mission was due to a written correspondence between Christ Himself and Agbarus, Prince of Edessa. Eusebius gives a translation from the Syriac of two letters which he found preserved in the archives of that city, the one entitled, 'A copy of a letter written by King Agbarus to Jesus, and sent to Him at Jerusalem by Ananias the courier; the other entitled, 'The answer of Jesus to King Agbarus by the courier Ananias.' This answer commences, 'Blessed art thou, O Agbarus, who, without seeing, hast believed in Me. For it is written concerning Me, that they who have seen Me will not believe: though they who have not seen may believe.'

This correspondence is not only a forgery, but a very clumsy one. The words quoted are a manifest plagiarism of the words addressed to Thomas, 'Because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.' These words are recorded in S. John's Gospel, which was written after the death of Christ, whereas the fictitious correspondence purports to have taken place in His lifetime. Besides that, we may be sure that if a letter of which Christ was believed by the early Christians to be the author had been preserved, it would not have been suffered by them to remain buried in obscurity at Edessa, but would have been diligently copied and read in their churches.³

¹ Seres, a nation inhabiting a country to the east of the Ganges, now part of China.

² *Eccles. Hist. b. i. c. 13.*

³ Eusebius appears to have accepted these documents as genuine. If so,

The extreme antiquity of these documents—for they were ancient when Eusebius saw them, probably early in the fourth century—is strong evidence that a church had been planted in Edessa in Apostolic times. The imaginative chronicler, who embellished his subject with fictitious letters, would hardly have ventured to represent the king of the country as a convert to Christianity unless that was the case.

There are other apparently more trustworthy documents in the same collection which give detailed accounts of the sufferings of Christians at Edessa in the reign of Trajan. These documents are attested by different public notaries, and so carefully record circumstances of time and place, that they may be safely accepted as substantially correct. They show clearly that in the first century a Christian Church had been established at Edessa with sanction of the King Agbar already mentioned, that some of his successors adopted a different policy, and cruelly persecuted the Christians, and that this persecution was stopped by the edict of Trajan.¹

Another important church founded in Apostolic times was that of Alexandria.

Alexandria, situated on the Mediterranean, near one of the mouths of the Nile, was founded by Alexander the Great about B.C. 332, and became part of the dominion of the Romans thirty years before Christ. When, on the death of Cleopatra, Egypt was reduced by Augustus to a province,

the circumstance detracts from his credit as a historian: it is, however, just to add that he seldom shows the like credulity in other parts of his history; and a passage in which the letter of Christ is said to be 'full of power' is supposed to be an interpolation.

Among the ancient Syriac documents discovered in 1848 by Dr. Cureton is one entitled, *The Doctrine of Addæus the Apostle*, which contains a long account of miracles worked by Addæus (or Thaddeus), and of the conversion of King Agbar and the city of Edessa by him. But the anachronisms in this document show that it is spurious. It states that ministers appointed by Addæus read the Old and New Testament, whereas the word 'Testament,' as applied to the Scriptures, did not come into use until the latter part of the second century. This document states also that these ministers read the *Diateseron*, which was not compiled until the second century.

¹ The 'Acts of Sharbil' (*Ancient Syriac Documents*, p. 41); the 'Martyrdom of Barsamya' (*Ib.* p. 63).

Alexandria became the most important commercial city of Egypt. Vast quantities of merchandise were conveyed from the far East by the Indian seas and the valley of the Nile to Alexandria, and from that port were shipped to Rome.¹

A large part of the inhabitants of Alexandria at the commencement of the Christian era were Jews. They were allowed to occupy two out of the five quarters into which the city was divided, and had not only complete toleration as to their religions, but also were permitted to have their own separate government and courts of justice. 'There is also,' says Josephus, 'an ethnarch allowed them, who governs the people and distributes justice to them, and regulates their contracts and laws as if he were ruler of a free republic.'² Shortly, however, after the death of Christ (A.D. 39) the Jews became the objects of a most frightful persecution by the other inhabitants of the city; and the Roman Governor sided with the populace, and withdrew his protection from the Jews. Throughout the reign of Caligula they were harassed; and a deputation, of which the celebrated Philo was the chief, was sent unsuccessfully to the Emperor to solicit redress. During the war which ended in the fall of Jerusalem, the revolt of the Jews in Palestine embittered the public feeling against the Jews of Alexandria; and on one occasion, according to Josephus,³ the Roman soldiers and the populace of Alexandria fell upon the Jews, and slaughtered fifty thousand of them.

Alexandria was not merely a commercial city; it was also a renowned seat of learning. The great Alexandrine library was at one time the largest in the world, and was said to have contained 700,000 volumes. The city was a centre of scientific knowledge. The schools of Alexandrine philosophy were renowned throughout the civilised world. Three centuries before the Christian era the illustrious mathematician Euclid

¹ There are two references to this trade in the Acts of the Apostles. When S. Paul was first sent a prisoner to Rome, in the earlier part of the journey 'the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy, and he put us therein' (Acts xxvii. 6). This ship was subsequently wrecked at Malta. Thence, 'after three months we set sail in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered there, whose sign was the Twin Brothers' (Acts xxviii. 11).

² *Antiquities*, b. xiv. c. 7.

³ *Wars*, b. ii. c. 18.

had flourished there, and digested into a regular and wonderfully methodic system all that was then known of pure geometry. The schools established by him became so celebrated that it was said that for many centuries no mathematician could be found who had not studied at Alexandria.

One of the most remarkable products of the literary activity of this famous capital was the Septuagint—a work which had immense influence upon the theology both of the Jews and the Christians.¹

According to ancient tradition the Church of Alexandria was founded by S. Mark the evangelist. The earliest record of that tradition now extant appears to be a passage in Eusebius. His statement is as follows: 'It is said that the same Mark was the first who was sent to Egypt, that he preached there the Gospel which he had written, and first established churches at Alexandria.'² The connection of S. Mark with the Alexandrine churches is well authenticated. It is quite clear that a regularly organised Christian Church existed at Alexandria long before the close of the first century; for Eusebius has given a list of the bishops who occupied the See during that period. He says that in the eighth year of the reign of Nero (A.D. 62), 'Annianus succeeded the apostle and evangelist Mark in the administration of the Church at Alexandria. He was a man distinguished for his piety, and admirable in every respect.'³ Eusebius gives the dates of the succession of the several bishops so precisely, that there can hardly be a doubt that he relied upon documents not now extant. If the first date is correct, S. Mark must have preached in Egypt many years before the martyrdom of SS. Peter and Paul. In this respect Eusebius is confirmed by Epiphanius, a bishop of the fourth century, who says that Mark, companion of S. Peter, composed his Gospel at Rome, and 'having written it was sent by the holy Peter into the country of the Egyptians.'⁴

¹ An account of the Septuagint will be given in a subsequent chapter.

² Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* b. ii. c. 16.

³ *Ib.* b. ii. c. 24. Eusebius says the second bishop was Avilius, and the third Cerdon (*Eccles. Hist.* b. iii. cc. 14 and 21).

⁴ Epiphanius, cited Lardner, *Hist. of the Apostles*, chap. vii. Dr. Lardner

Many memorable names occur in the history of this church. One of the most illustrious teachers of Apostolic times was Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, 'a learned man,' and 'mighty in the Scriptures,' who became a close companion of S. Paul. Among other names conspicuous in the later history of the same Church are Clement, Bishop of Alexandria, born about the middle of the second century; and his pupil Origen, born A.D. 185, two of the most eloquent and learned writers in defence of the Christian religion.

Here ends our brief and very imperfect survey of the work done in the first establishment of Christianity in the Eastern world. Our information as to the mode in which that great work was accomplished is scanty and fragmentary, although the general character of the results is known with certainty. The Jews of the Dispersion comprised three great sections—those of the far East, dwelling beyond the Euphrates, and occupying Babylonia and Mesopotamia; another numerous class, inhabiting the extensive and populous Roman provinces of Syria and Asia Minor; and lastly, the numerous settlements of Egypt and the north-west of Africa, including Alexandria, that wonderful seat of arts, commerce, and learning. Jews thronged the great cities of Greece and Italy, and every great port and emporium along the coasts of the Euxine and the Mediterranean were occupied with colonies of this enterprising people. Almost universally, they were familiar with the Greek language, which became an easy means of general communication, and greatly facilitated the diffusion of Christianity among them and among their Gentile neighbours. And thus it came to pass, that every great city of Italy, Greece, and the Oriental province, received the message of the Gospel before the close of the first century.

The triumphs were won not by the sword, but by the mightier power of speech, and the still more mighty influence of example. Many of the Gentiles themselves had become ashamed of their gods and weary of the wickedness of the times. In these pages an attempt will be made to

considers that there is only one Mark in the New Testament, and Dr. Lightfoot is of the same opinion (*Epistle to Colossians*, p. 302).

describe—so far as is permissible to a modern pen—something of the unspeakably degraded state of society. Greeks, Romans, and Asiatics were sunk in an abysm of iniquity. Yet there were among them some who were ready to revolt against the social bondage which vice, superstition, and cruelty inflicted. To them the preaching of a religion, which was ‘first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits,’ was a revelation indeed. What! was it possible that the worship of false gods, with their filthy legends and obscene mysteries, might cease? Was it possible that men might live pure, clean lives, and forsake practices which degraded them below the level of the brutes of the field? Was it possible the shrieks of the tortured slave and the groans of the dying gladiator might be heard no more? The apostles and their companions showed them a way by which all these things might become possible.

Another marvel connected with the first diffusion of Christianity was the systematic way in which these preachers pursued their course. Churches were established with regular succession of ministers and settled rules; and this was accomplished in spite of malignant opposition from Jews and Gentiles. Of the heroes by whom this moral revolution was commenced we know comparatively little. History has recorded the names of the apostles and a few of their fellow labourers; but besides these there must have been a myriad of others, whose names are not written in any earthly book—men who perilled their lives in the cause of Christianity. But though we know scarcely anything of their labours and sufferings we do know the result. Everywhere throughout the vast Roman empire they taught and spoke in such a manner that men were compelled to listen to them; and the ultimate effect of their teaching was to overthrow the Greek and Roman gods.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STATE OF ROME.

IN the century preceding the Christian era the Jews were numerous in Italy. Pompey had transported several thousands from Judæa to Rome. Cicero complains that the Italian Jews were accustomed to send gold to Jerusalem, and that the Senate had forbidden the practice¹—thus showing that the numbers and wealth of these immigrants were so great as to attract public attention. In the time of Julius Cæsar the Hebrew inhabitants of Rome were treated with special indulgence, and allowed to celebrate their festivals;² and this policy was continued in the time of his successor Augustus, that is, at the commencement of the Christian era. That Emperor directed that when the day on which largess of corn was distributed among the pauper population happened to be a Sabbath, the Jews' portion should be reserved for them to another day. Again, when the inhabitants of Judæa on the death of Herod sent a petition to Rome for liberty, that petition was supported by eight thousand Hebrew inhabitants of the city, and was considered and answered by the Emperor Augustus in a spirit of conciliation.

But this tolerance did not long continue. After the death of Augustus the Jews became objects of popular aversion. The next Emperor, Tiberius, deported a large number of them to Sardinia. Claudius (the next Emperor but one) banished them all. S. Luke tells us that when S. Paul reached Corinth he found there 'a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla;

¹ *Oratio pro Flacco*, quoted *ante*, Chapter V.

² Josephus, *Antiq.* b. xiv. c. 10, s. 3.

because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome.'¹

There is a remarkable passage in Suetonius, of which conflicting interpretations have been given, in which he says the Emperor Claudius 'expelled from Rome the Jews who were continually in a state of tumult, *their instigator being Chrestus*.'² Some writers understand this passage to refer to feuds between the Jews and Christians.³ Another explanation is that the disturbances were caused 'by various conflicting rumours of claimants to the Messiahship.'⁴ But whatever may be the precise meaning of the passage in Suetonius it is clear that there were disturbances in Rome, on account of which the Jews were expelled.

It is curious to observe the change of Roman feeling with regard to these settlers. In the time of Horace they were regarded contemptuously but not with absolute aversion. In one place⁵ he refers to their proselytising spirit; in another to their superstitious credulity.⁶ Afterwards, the popular feeling, as reflected in Latin authors, became far more hostile and bitter. Juvenal, writing about the end of the first century of the Christian era, gives the Jews a very bad character indeed. According to him 'they are accustomed to despise the Roman laws: They teach and observe the Judaic code and all that Moses delivered to them in his mysterious volume; but they will not show the way to anyone but those of their own

¹ Acts xviii. 2.

² 'Judæos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Româ expulit.'—Suet. *Claudius*.

³ Milman, *History of the Jews*, b. xix.

⁴ Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 15. It is generally assumed that 'Chrestus' means 'Christ.' But that is not absolutely certain. The name Chrestus is not uncommon. Cicero speaks of a robbery by one Chrestus ('Chresti compilationem': *Ad Diversos*, ii. 8). The name occurs in Martial's *Epigrams*, viii. 55; ix. 28. Among the scribblings (*graffiti*) on the walls of Pompeii is one in which Atellana, an actress, declares her love for Chrestus, and prays Venus to be propitious to them.—*Pompeii and Herculaneum*, by Adams, p. 58.

⁵ ac, veluti te

Judæi, cogemus in hanc concedere turbam.

Serm. lib. i. sat. iv. 142.

Credat Judæus Apella

Non ego. Namque deos didici securum agere avum.

Serm. lib. i. sat. v. 100.

religion, nor direct the thirsty wayfarer to a spring if he is uncircumcised.'¹

Even so grave a writer as Tacitus repeats the most absurd calumnies about the Jews. His ignorance and credulity with respect to their history and customs are amazing. He says² all things are profane with them that the Romans consider sacred; and that they have an image of an ass in the most holy place of their temple, because during their wanderings in the wilderness a herd had shown them the way to water-springs. For their practice of resting on the seventh day it is supposed that they do so either to give honour to the god Saturn, the worship of whom they may have got from the Idæi, or because 'among the seven stars by which mortals are governed the star of Saturn moves in the highest orbit and with the greatest power.'³ To this farrago of nonsense Tacitus adds that the rites of the Hebrews are impure, that though faithful to each other they are hostile to the rest of mankind, that they are extremely prone to lasciviousness, and though they refrain from intercourse with foreign women they allow promiscuous concubinage among their own people.

If a generally cautious and accurate writer like Tacitus could give credence to such absurd stories, we can readily understand that the popular prejudice against the Jews would be general and intense. They dwelt in their own quarter, apart from the rest of the citizens, and had no dealings with the Romans except for the purposes of traffic and gain. In the squalid narrow streets of a suburb, on the western side of the river, this strange people led a life and observed rites

¹ Romanas autem soliti contemnere leges,
Judaicum ediscunt et servant ac metuunt jus,
Tradidit arcano quodcumque volumine Moses:
Non monstrare vias, eadem nisi sacra colenti,
Quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos.—*Sat.* xiv. 100.

² 'Profana illic omnia quæ apud nos sacra; rursum concessa apud illos quæ nobis incesta. . . . Cætera instituta sinistra fœda pravitate valere. . . . Apud ipsos fides obstinata, misericordia in promptu, sed adversus omnes alios hostile odium. Separati epulis, discreti cubilibus, projectissima ad libidinem gens, alienarum concubitu abstinent: inter se nihil illicitum.'—*Hist.* v. 4, 5.

³ 'Seu quod de septem sideribus quis mortales reguntur, altissimo orbe et præcipuâ potentiâ stella Saturni feratur.'—*Hist.* v. 4.

and ceremonies which rendered them the object of suspicion and aversion.¹

Of the immorality which prevailed at Rome when Christianity was first preached there we have proof in the pages of such writers as Juvenal and Tacitus. The satirist lashes the vices of his countrymen with unsparing severity. The historian, while he describes these enormities, tells us that they excited disgust in the minds of many of the better classes. The degradation was not universal. One can scarcely believe that all or even the greater part of the descendants of the antique Romans were utterly debased. Still the unconcern with which the most horrid vices are mentioned by Latin authors proves beyond doubt that the recognised standard of morals was very low.

Sensuality and cruelty are frequent companions. The ferocity of the Roman laws, especially with respect to slaves, appears to us almost fiendish. The master had the most absolute power over the slave—could torture or crucify him, or throw him to the wild beasts at his own sole will and pleasure. A slave was a chattel—not a person; therefore if anyone assaulted or killed him, the law regarded this not as a wrong to the slave but as an injury to the master, for which he might bring an action for damages. This unhappy class of people was very numerous. In large establishments there were often several hundreds, and a household which had so few as ten was considered very small. The punishments inflicted on them depended entirely on the caprice of the master,

¹ The Regio Transtiberina—the region beyond the Tiber—was the Jews' quarter until the sixteenth century, when Paul IV. allotted the Ghetto to them on the opposite side of the river. In 1869 it is thus described: 'The modern Ghetto is in the filthy quarter between the Capitoline Hill and the old Fabrician Bridge, which leads to the island and thence to the Transtevere. It is surrounded by walls, and the gates are closed every night by the police.'—Conybeare and Howson, *Life of S. Paul*, c. 24.

This description is no longer correct. The streets of the Ghetto are narrow, but they are assiduously swept, and though densely crowded are by no means disagreeable to traverse. Of course the practice of immuring the inhabitants nightly no longer exists. To the student of Christian history, the Ghetto is one of the most interesting parts of Rome. The Jewish features and Oriental garments of the people give the thronged streets a very curious and characteristic appearance.

and were often diversified by the most savage ingenuity. The common infliction for trifling transgression was the lash unsparingly applied, and to increase the effect the sufferer was sometimes hung up by the hands and weights attached to his feet. The flogging of slaves, which in large establishments was performed by a regular body of scourgers, affords an inexhaustible theme for jests in comic writers.¹

By an ancient law, when the master of a house was murdered by one of his slaves or an unknown assassin, all the slaves who were in the house at the time were put to death. Tacitus gives a horrible instance of the enforcement of this law, probably at the very time when S. Paul was resident in Rome. Pedanius Secundus, a senator, had been slain by one of his own slaves, of whom there were four hundred under his roof at the time of the murder. Even to Romans accustomed to scenes of cruelty and bloodshed it seemed too horrible that four hundred innocent persons should suffer for the guilt of one. However, the senate took the matter up warmly. It was one of their own body that was slain, and they felt compelled to stand by their own order. The arguments adduced in the debates for enforcing the law illustrate the condition of Roman society and the terror of new religious doctrines which even then began to have their influence in Rome. It is some satisfaction to find that there was a strong popular feeling against shedding so much innocent blood. Even in the senate itself—be it said to their credit—there were some who shrank from such horrible rigour; whilst many others, on the contrary, voted against admitting any innovation on the old law. The doctrine of the wisdom of our ancestors prevailed. Tacitus has recorded the speech of one Caius Cassius, who enforced this doctrine successfully, and his oration gives a lively picture of the times. After reminding the august assembly of his frequent unsuccessful attempts to resist changes of the old laws and institutions, this eminently conservative politician proceeds:—

At the same time I considered that whatever weight might attach to my character ought not to be destroyed by reiterated

¹ Ramsay, *Manual of Roman Antiquities*, Tit. 'Slaves.'

defeats in order that it might remain entire if at any time the state stood in need of my counsels. Such a conjuncture this day has brought forth. A man of consular rank has been murdered in his own house by the treachery of his slaves! This plot none of them prevented or disclosed, though the decree was in force which denounced capital punishment to the whole household. Establish—if you will—impunity by your decree. But what security will anyone obtain from his rank when even the title of Prefect of Rome availed not to the possessor? . . . Are we to hunt up arguments in a matter long ago discussed and decided by our wiser ancestors?

That argument of the superior wisdom of ancestors prevailed, as it has done many a time before and since the time of Caius Cassius. Still the Roman populace were not quite satisfied. No doubt their forefathers were very wise, yet it did seem rather hard that four hundred people should be slain for the crime of one. The majority of the senate decreed that the whole household—men, women, and children—about whose innocence there was absolutely no doubt, should be slain. But the indignation of the people was so great that the way to the place of execution had to be lined by soldiers.¹

There is one passage in the speech just quoted which seems to throw some light on the state of religious opinion in Rome. Bearing in mind that there were at this time large numbers of proselytising Jews in the city, and remembering that there were already Christian congregations, and that in all probability S. Paul was preaching in his own hired house, the following passage from the speech of Caius Cassius has a deep significance:—

By our ancestors the disposition of slaves was suspected even when they were born on their estates or in their houses, and had from their birth had the benefit of their master's benevolence. But now that we have in our households slaves whose rites differ widely from our own, and who observe the religion of foreign countries or none at all, it is not possible to restrain such a promiscuous multitude except by the terrors of the law.

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, b. xiv. c. 45.

This reference to innovations in religion, at the very time—be it remembered—when Christianity was introduced into Italy, is remarkable. The mythology of the Romans was very elastic. They were a mixed race derived from several ancient stocks—Latins, Etruscans, and Sabines: and their ancient religious system was naturally of a composite character. Moreover, as their intercourse with Greece extended it was found that several Greek divinities bore a strong resemblance to their own: and every Greek god was identified with some member of the Roman Pantheon. But though the Romans were ready to identify their gods with those of Greece, they looked with jealousy upon the introduction of deities of other nations, although this was in some cases permitted. Shortly before this period of which we are treating the worship of the Egyptian Isis had become fashionable, and under the Empire, Osiris, Anubis, Serapis, and a multitude of outlandish deities were eagerly cultivated.¹

The degradation of the Roman character commenced nearly two centuries before the Christian era. In the early days of the republic the Romans were a nation of soldiers, and possessed the soldierly virtues and vices. On the one hand, they were brave and temperate, and despised luxury. On the other hand, their discipline was horribly cruel, and they were merciless in their triumphs. Up to the time of Cato the Censor the people seem to have retained this primitive character, though the nobles had begun to be voluptuous and extravagant. When Cato offered himself as a candidate for the office of Censor (B.C. 184) he announced his intention, if elected, to insist on a severe reform of public morals, and his election by the populace, in spite of the efforts of the higher classes, is a proof that the burgesses did not as yet tolerate the debauchery of the patricians. Cato feared that with a taste for Grecian art and literature his countrymen would acquire a taste for Grecian voluptuousness—and the event justified his fears.

¹ The Emperor Tiberius caused the Temple of Isis to be destroyed on account of the scandalous conduct of her priests (*Josephus. Antiq. b. xviii. c. 3*); but at a later period the worship of Isis was common at Rome.—*Juvenal, Sat. vi. passim.*

The pages of Livy are eloquent with praises of the antique Romans. He speaks of their contempt for riches, their love of truth, their simple religious faith, and their manliness. We must make some deduction on the score of his patriotism, but that the old republicans possessed the sterner virtues cannot be denied. The contrast which he draws between the ancient manners and those of his own time is complete. Writing probably a very few years before the commencement of the Christian era, he says:—

Never was a republic greater, or holier, or richer in noble examples. Never was there a state which so long resisted the inroads of avarice and luxury; in which there was so much honour for poverty and frugality, and in which the less the wealth the greater was the contentment. But now riches beget avarice, and the prevalent voluptuousness threatens a universal perdition through luxury and lust.¹

This degradation, which had commenced long before Livy's day, is distinctly traceable to Greek and Asiatic influences. As Rome became wealthy with the spoils of nations she became corrupt. The overthrow of the Macedonian Empire² had rendered her mistress of the world. Greece, Asia Minor, and Syria were included in her vast eastern domains. The costliest treasures of those regions were wrested from them. Tribute poured into the Roman treasury, and Rome became a centre to which streams of wealth converged. Luxury prevailed more and more in dress, ornaments, banquets. Merchants and capitalists acquired enormous fortunes, and the wealthy Roman nobles filled their palaces with works of Greek art.³

The old Roman virtues gave place to greed of gold and luxurious ease. Had this been all, it would have been bad enough; but there were worse—infinately worse—changes of

¹ Livy, *Hist. Prefatio*.

² B.C. 168, the date of the battle of Pydna. About twenty years later Mummius besieged and destroyed Corinth, and sent its most famous works of art to Rome, and all Greece, except Thessaly, became the Roman province of Achaia.

³ See Mommsen's *Hist. of Rome*, b. iii. c. 13.

public morals. Greek vices¹ and the most horrible obscenities became common among the wealthier classes. In the time of Cicero, about half a century before the Christian era, many of the principal statesmen and senators notoriously lived lives of infamous profligacy, and made indulgence in the grossest sensuality their chief occupation.²

The final overthrow of the Roman republic was mainly due to the degeneracy of the Senate. The time had been when that institution had worthily represented all that was most noble in the Roman character. The Senate was, in a great degree, a representative body, because it included all those who had been elected to the highest offices of the State by popular suffrage. Besides that, the censors, who were themselves elected by the body of the citizens, had possessed the power of excluding from the senatorial list the names of unworthy members; and thus a high standard of character was maintained. But in the course of four centuries³ the Senate lost its old dignity, and was converted from a body of free counsellors into a close corporation. A long struggle between the democracy and the venal and corrupt nobility ended—as such struggles are apt to do—in the establishment of a military dictatorship—that of Julius Cæsar.

He, at least, was not likely to raise the standard of public morals. The character given to him by his contemporaries cannot be quoted here. It is enough to say that his private life was horribly and indescribably licentious. It would be foreign to our present purpose to trace, with anything like minuteness, the subsequent transitions of government, for we are concerned only with the actual state of Rome when the Church was first founded there.

The Emperor Augustus—in whose reign Christ was born—vainly endeavoured to restrain the prevalent luxury; but the laws which he enacted on the subject were treated with contempt. The evil was rather increased than abated by these

¹ Of the infamous vices of the Greeks, Justin Martyr, writing in the earlier part of the second century, has given an account; but it cannot be repeated here (*First Apology*, c. 27).

² Forsyth, *Life of Cicero*, c. 11.

³ The Censorship was instituted B.C. 443.

abortive efforts. His successor, Tiberius, frankly avowed his inability to check the prodigality of the age. The *Ædiles*, who had a duty of preserving public order and decency, applied to the Senate to enforce the sumptuary laws by severe penalties. The Senate referred the application to the Emperor. Tiberius replied that it was useless to interfere; where, he asked, was he to make a beginning? Was he to prohibit the erection of vast country houses? Or the enormous establishments of servants and slaves? Or the costly pictures and houses? Or the gorgeous vestments and jewellery? If the worthy *Ædiles* liked to try their hands at reviving primitive manners, by all means let them do so. He was not going to make himself unpopular and ridiculous by attempting impossibilities. Why, he added, did frugality prevail in the olden time? It was because the Roman dominion was then confined to Italy, and there were not the same incentives to luxury. By foreign conquests the people had learned to waste the property of others, and by civil wars they learned to waste their own.¹

Tacitus adds that the evil continued unabated all through the subsequent reigns of Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. Tiberius had a nickname, 'Biberius'—a punning allusion to his drinking propensities, and, according to Tacitus, was guilty of horrible licentiousness. Of the frightful sensuality of Caligula and Nero no description can be attempted here. What makes the picture of the times more terrible is that they practised their most horrid vices quite openly. They not only wallowed in the foulest sty of human lust, but also invited all Rome to see them there.²

In modern times we can hardly realise a state of society such as this. No doubt there has been wickedness in all ages, but the most profligate of men usually endeavour to conceal their worst iniquities. At least they know that they offend against a social law, and therefore seek to escape the indignation of public opinion. But the utter abasement and degradation of Rome consisted in this: that Caligula and Nero

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, b. iii. c. 54.

² Examples of the obscenity practised quite publicly by Nero are given by Tacitus (*Annals*, b. xv. c. 37) and Juvenal (*Sat.* x. 333); but they cannot be quoted here even in Latin.

did not offend public opinion. They did not violate the laws of morality and decency, because those laws had ceased to exist.

And this was the condition of the centre of civilisation and the mistress of the world, when Christianity was first preached. This was the abyss of perdition into which mighty Rome had fallen. It was horrible, very horrible. Truly the nations whom she had despoiled in her lust of conquest had their revenge. The treasure and tribute gained by their overthrow wrought ruin to the victors.

We are not to infer that the corruption was universal. On the contrary, there is ample evidence to show that, among some classes of the community, the social virtues were practised and social affections cherished. Juvenal indeed could say that the number of virtuous men was not greater than the number of the gates of Thebes, and that not a day passed without its crimes of robbery, treachery, and murder.¹ But this was an obvious exaggeration of the satirist.

The funeral inscriptions, of which multitudes are preserved in Rome and other great cities of Italy, give many examples of the purest and most natural human sympathies. Those old stones oftentimes show that parents loved their children, that children honoured their parents, that husbands could be devotedly fond of their wives, that Roman matrons could be chaste, modest, and diligent, and practise every domestic virtue. The grief is oftentimes expressed with passionate intensity, and is the more pathetic because it is the grief of pagan despair—a sorrow without hope. Bereaved parents exclaim wildly against fate. Take, for instance, this example: 'Our hope was in our boy: now all is ashes and lamentation.' Or this, 'Orcus has taken from me him in whom was my hope.' A mother exclaims that now she has lost her son life has become hateful. A father curses the god of Hades, and laments that the loving, winning ways

¹ Quo tam festa dies ut cesset prodere furem
 Perfidiam fraudes atque omni ex crimine lucrum
 Quasitum et partos gladio vel pyxide nummos?
 Rari quippe boni: numero vix sunt totidem quot
 Thebaram porte vel divitis ostia Nili. -*Sat.* xiii. 23.

of his daughter could not save her from becoming 'the prey of brutal Pluto.' The examples of conjugal fidelity are frequent. In one case a husband says of his wife, 'I never received any pain from her except by her death.' Another says of his that, 'though dead, she will always be alive to him, and always be golden in his eyes.' A widow prays the spirits of the dead to take her from life, since she cannot endure to live without her husband, who was her light.¹

These examples, which might be indefinitely extended, show that the picture of Roman morals had its lights as well as its shadows. We find instances of man and wife living together happily and affectionately for long series of years. And these examples are the more significant when we consider the facility with which divorces could be obtained. It is one of the worst characteristics of the late Republic and early Empire that marriage had become almost an idle ceremony, and the matrimonial relation was a mere temporary arrangement which the husband could terminate for very slight reasons, or without any reason.

It had been the boast of the old Republic that divorce was unknown, and we are positively assured that 'for five or six centuries after the foundation of the city not one instance of the severance of the nuptial tie was known. The first divorce at Rome was that of Spurius Servilius (B.C. 231), and it is noteworthy that the ground of the divorce was not infidelity, but the fact that there had not been children of the marriage, and that the conduct of the husband was the subject of public reprobation. It would be hard to imagine a more decisive proof of the difference between the morals of old Rome and the Rome of the Emperors, than the change of feeling respecting the conjugal relation. With the old Romans the marriage tie was severed by death alone. With the later Romans the wife was the instrument of the husband's caprice, and he could cast away the toy when it ceased to please him. The ancient

¹ Northcote, *Epitaphs of the Catacombs*, p. 71, where numerous similar epitaphs are given.

The Galleria Lapidaria, in the Vatican, contains a collection of 3,000 heathen and early Christian inscriptions. Unfortunately, this gallery is not now generally open to the public.

legal and religious ceremonies¹ of marriage were almost obsolete, and in most cases cohabitation was mere concubinage.

With the wealthy Romans voluptuousness became a science. Previously to their banquets they indulged in warm baths with circumstances of infamous obscenity. Their dining rooms were fitted up with the utmost magnificence. The daintiest viands were served in costly dishes to guests who reclined luxuriously on couches inlaid with ivory and covered with cloth of gold, and the entertainment frequently concluded with lascivious dances, in which women, hired from Spain or Syria, allured the eye by licentious gestures.²

These were the pleasures of the rich. The pleasures of the other classes were not a whit better. Men and women of every rank thronged to theatres, where the most favourite spectacles were pantomimic dances, in which every art was employed to stimulate passion, and the love stories of the gods were represented with shameless obscenity. Mæcenas, whom we are wont to respect as a patron of art and literature, promoted these licentious entertainments. Augustus sanctioned them, and they formed a regular part of the annual festivals celebrated in his honour. The people took such delight in these scandalous performances that Tiberius dared not provoke popular resentment by abolishing them.³

Horrible as were these public entertainments, there were others even more atrocious. The climax of horror was reached in the exhibitions of gladiators slaughtering each other for the amusement of vast crowds of spectators. Under the Empire these cruel sports excited the greatest public interest, and frequently enormous numbers fought together in the amphitheatre. The accounts of these wholesale butcheries which have come down to us are absolutely sickening. It seems almost incredible to us that human beings could sit still to behold their fellow creatures hacking each other to pieces. Yet the Roman citizens, high and low—ladies daintily clad, and the vile rabble alike—crowded the amphitheatre when

¹ 'Confarreatio' and 'coemptio.'

² Juvenal, *Sat.* xi. 156.

³ Juvenal, *Sat.* vi. 61; Tacitus, *Ann.* b. i. c. 54.

a fight of gladiators was advertised. The combatants were slaves, prisoners of war, or hired ruffians carefully trained. The show began with a mock fight with wooden swords. After a while a trumpet sounded and the real business of the day commenced. The wooden weapon was exchanged for the sharp sword, the deadly spear, and the bright flashing scimitar. Sometimes one of the combatants armed with a net was pitted against an opponent armed with a sword, and endeavoured to entangle him in its meshes and stab him. If the cast of the net was eluded the successful combatant chased his victim round the arena, and speedily despatched him. Others fought with swords and complete armour. As soon as a disabling wound was inflicted the wounded man held up his finger in token of submission. If he had fought bravely and well and was a favourite, the crowd shouted applause, and his life was spared. If he was unpopular they held down their thumbs silent; the conqueror plunged his weapon into the unresisting victim; the attendants rushed in and dragged off the corpse with a hook and sprinkled fresh sand on the arena, and fresh actors entered to perform like tragedies.

To this depth of infamy and cruelty had Rome descended. Women had lost their sense of modesty and pity, and men had become effeminate and bloodthirsty. To the imported vices of the Greek they added a fiendish love of sights of blood. Domestic life and conjugal fidelity were almost unknown. Here and there were exceptions. Some few men retained their manhood: some few women still deserved the proud title of Roman matrons. But these were rare compared with the mass of the population. The evidence is too strong to be resisted that the vast majority of the people were given over to licentiousness and savagery. Men and women gloated with equal delight over the obscene gestures of the pantomime and the agonies of the dying gladiators. Rome had become indeed—indeed—‘the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth.’

CHAPTER X.

THE CHURCH AT ROME.

TIDINGS of Christianity reached Rome soon after the Crucifixion. At the feast of Pentecost, fifty days after that event, Jerusalem was filled again, as at the Passover, with a vast concourse of foreign Jews, among whom were 'strangers of Rome.' These listened to the bold declaration of S. Peter, 'Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and God, this Jesus, whom ye crucified.'¹

Pentecost, or the harvest thanksgiving, was one of the three great festivals of the Jewish ecclesiastical year. Josephus informs us that at this feast 'many myriads' of people used to assemble at Jerusalem.² Probably many of the Roman Jews whom S. Peter addressed carried back to Rome news of the doctrine which he preached.

Our information respecting the first preaching of Christianity in that city is very imperfect. The next material incident with which we are acquainted is the expulsion of the Jews from Rome in the reign of Claudius (A.D. 52). This event, as we shall see, had important results, and it is worth while to consider it carefully.

Claudius was by no means hostile to the Jews—at all events at the commencement of his reign. On the contrary, he had issued edicts granting them liberty to observe their ancient rites and customs, in all cities and colonies, both within Italy and in the rest of the empire.³ How then are we to explain the rigorous decree by which they were driven from Rome? S. Luke does not give any explanation; but

¹ Acts ii. 36.

² *Antiquities*, b. xiv. c. 13; b. xvii. c. 10.

³ *Ib.* b. xix. c. 5.

merely says, 'Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome.'¹

Tacitus, referring to the annals of the same year, says that the Senate passed a decree, severe but ineffectual, for expelling fortune-tellers from Italy.² It seems probable that the edict to which he refers is either the same as that mentioned by S. Luke, or closely connected with it. In the first place the dates coincide. Secondly, there was at Rome a tribe of vagabond Jews who pretended to possess the art of divination, and preyed on the credulity of the people.³ Egyptians and Jews were commonly believed to be able to reveal the secrets of futurity, and were consulted by the superstitious. The practice was so common as to have become a public nuisance, and there had been repeated attempts to suppress it by public edicts.⁴ That to which Tacitus refers must have operated mainly against Jews. There may have been, and probably were, several reasons for ordering the Jews out of the city—one, the desire to free it from a set of impostors—another, the expediency of removing troublesome, disorderly foreigners who were quarrelling among themselves on religious questions, about which the Roman people generally knew nothing and cared nothing. A third reason may have been fear of the presence of a disaffected race, whose countrymen continually threatened rebellion.

But whatever the motives for this expulsion may have

¹ Acts xviii. 1.

² *Annals*, b. xii. c. 52.

³ Juvenal speaks of the Jew beggars who infested a grove in Rome, and describes a woman of this class ready at any moment to put down her basket and tell fortunes.—*Sat.* iii. 13 and *Sat.* vi. 541.

In the New Testament there are several references to Jews who practised sorcery and similar arts. Simon amazed the people of Samaria by his sorceries (Acts viii. 11). At Paphos was 'a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar Jesus' (Acts xii. 6). At Corinth there were 'strolling Jews, exorcists.'

⁴ For instance, Tacitus speaks of decrees in the time of Tiberius for driving astrologers and magicians out of Italy (*Annals*, b. ii. c. 32). The deportation of 4,000 freedmen in the same reign to Sardinia seems to have been a measure of the same character. Tacitus says (*Annals*, ii. 85) the Senate took measures for suppressing Egyptian and Jewish rites, and decreed that 4,000 persons infected with that superstition ('quattuor millia libertini generis eâ superstitione infecta') should be sent to Sardinia.

been, it led to momentous consequences in the history of the Church, for it brought S. Paul for the first time into personal communication with Roman Christians. In the latter part of the year in which the Jews were driven from Rome, S. Paul 'departed from Athens and came to Corinth. And finding a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome, he went to them. And because he was of the same trade, he remained with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade.'¹

Most probably Aquila and Priscilla were already converts when Paul 'found' them at Corinth. The enmity between Jews and Christians was so bitter that he could hardly have dwelt with them and preached weekly in the synagogue all the time if they still adhered to the Jewish faith. After a residence of a year and a half at Corinth, S. Paul went to Ephesus, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla, who there, as S. Luke states,² taught the doctrines of Christianity. They were eager, zealous disciples. In his Epistle to the Romans he calls them his, 'fellow labourers in the work of Christ Jesus, who to save my life laid down their own necks; who are thanked not by me alone, but by all the churches of the Gentiles.'³ To what incident in the eventful life of the Apostle this relates, we know not; but we do know that Aquila and Priscilla were active in the work to which he had devoted himself, and were ready to give their own lives to save his.

Two years after the banishment of the Jews from Italy the Emperor Claudius died (A.D. 54). His successor Nero began his reign moderately and temperately. Though his private life was infamous, his public conduct was not despotic. Under the advice of able and judicious counsellors, one of

¹ Acts xviii. 1.

² Acts xviii. 26.

³ Epistle to the Romans xvi. 3. Another consideration that renders it probable that Aquila and Priscilla were converts before they left Rome is this: that S. Paul, addressing the Church in their house, said he longed 'many years' to see them (Rom. xvi. 23). But he first met Aquila and Priscilla at Corinth, four years before this epistle was written; and that period could hardly be considered 'many years.'

whom was the celebrated Seneca, he promised to respect the power of the Senate and to govern with justice.¹

It may have been in pursuance of this liberal policy that the Jews were permitted to return to Rome. We know that they were there when S. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans (A.D. 58). The salutations at the close of that epistle are remarkable, for they contain the first distinct mention of a Christian church established at Rome :—

Salute Priscilla and Aquila my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life laid down their own necks : unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles ; and salute the church which is in their house. Salute Epænetus my beloved, who is the first-fruits of Asia unto Christ. Salute Mary, who bestowed much labour upon you. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also have been in Christ before me. Salute Ampliatus my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles the approved in Christ. Salute them which are of the household of Aristobulus. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Salute them of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. Salute Tryphœna and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute Persis, who laboured much in the Lord. Salute Rufus the chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren that are with them. Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints that are with them. Salute one another with an holy kiss. All the churches of Christ salute you.²

When this was written Aquila and Priscilla had returned to Rome, and a Christian congregation regularly met for worship in their house. We must remember that the first Christians had not any churches or buildings exclusively set apart for worship. They met in private dwellings.

¹ Tacitus, *Ann.* xiii. 4. Of the private life of Seneca we have the most contradictory accounts. Some writers attribute to him the purest sentiments of Christianity; others accuse him of initiating Nero in the most horrible vices which disgrace humanity.

² Romans xvi. 3. Dr. Lightfoot (*Epistle to Philippians*, p. 172) has an admirable commentary on this passage; and his answer to the critics who dispute the authenticity of it is complete.

Another point to be noticed is that many of the members of this band of Christians are obviously known to S. Paul personally. This is clear from the language in which he greets them. Some were his kinsmen,¹ or belonged to the same tribe, and had been his companions in one of his frequent imprisonments. These had become Christians even before the conversion of S. Paul. Others had risked their lives to save his; others had been fellow-labourers with him. One is called 'beloved,' another 'approved in Christ.' To each and all the appropriate words of greeting are sent, and doubtless those words were read eagerly and remembered lovingly.

Another circumstance of interest is the incidental reference to the diffusion of Christianity in the vast households of wealthy Romans. Greetings are sent to the servants of two persons—Aristobulus and Narcissus. It is not known certainly who these men were, but they were evidently opulent inhabitants of Rome who employed numerous dependents.² Reference has already been made to the enormous establishments of servants in large houses. The throngs maintained by the rich were almost incredibly numerous, amounting sometimes to several hundreds. Domestic work was divided among a large number of menials, who had each his distinct duties. The majority were slaves, the absolute property of their masters; but some were freedmen, persons who had been emancipated by their owners, but who were still in their service, and were regarded as of a lower social rank than free-born Roman citizens. In two such households Christianity had begun to be preached.

The names mentioned in these salutations show the Roman Church included people of various nations. Aquila and Priscilla were Jews of the Dispersion, who spoke Greek. Mary is

¹ τοὺς συγγενεῖς.

² Both names are of Greek origin, and were in common use among the Romans. Dr. Lightfoot (*Philippians*, p. 173) conjectures that Aristobulus was the grandson of Herod I., and Narcissus the celebrated freedman and favourite of Claudius, and that upon his death, shortly after the accession of Nero, his slaves were transferred to the household of that Emperor, still, however, retaining the name of Narcissus.

a purely Jewish name, and those whom S. Paul calls kinsmen must have been Jews by birth. Some of the names, as Urbanus and Julia, are Latin; but by far the greater number are of Greek origin. The probability is that the earliest Roman Church consisted principally of Hellenists or Greek-speaking Jews. Greek was the prevailing language of the Roman Church for more than two centuries. The prevalence of the Greek language in the inscriptions of the catacombs of Rome also indicates that the primitive church there was composed mainly of Jews and Grecians.¹

The number of persons mentioned by name in these salutations is about twenty, besides others mentioned by general description. But the greetings are first sent to the church assembled in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. Here an interesting question arises with relation to the extent to which Christianity had been diffused at Rome. It is reasonable to suppose that the apostle would endeavour to make the loving message as comprehensive and complete as he possibly could; and, consequently, that there were not many other Christians at Rome at the time.

Most probably, then, the number of Christian Jews was small compared with the rest of the Jewish population of the city. True it is that some five years previously there had been a general edict of banishment against the Jews on account (apparently) of disputes between them and the disciples of the new religion. But that is quite consistent with the fact that the latter were not numerous. The infrequency of allusions to them in classic authors points to the conclusion that they were insignificant both in number and in social position. Seneca, a most discursive writer on moral and religious themes, apparently did not know the existence of the new sect, and the satirists of the next generation, such as

¹ 'Up to the close of the second century Greek was the language of the Christians in Rome. All the Christian writings which were published in Rome were Greek. The names of the bishops with few exceptions are Greek. The first sermons which were preached there were in Greek. And the "Kyrie" still remains to witness to the Greek of the earliest liturgy.'—Westcott, *The Bible in the Church*, c. 5.

Juvenal, though they have plenty of gibes and sarcasms about the Jews, do not once mention Christians.

Still, it is clear that Christianity, soon after S. Paul wrote this epistle, began to make rapid progress in the capital. He had told the brethren that he intended to visit them shortly, and hoped to spend some time with them.¹ This hope was realised, but in a way altogether different from that which he had expected. He had thought to visit the city as a free man in the course of a missionary tour, but was sent to Rome a prisoner, to make his appeal to Cæsar.

The English reader is familiar with S. Luke's narrative of that remarkable journey. It seems strange to us that it occupied so long a time. The explanation is that it was commenced in the autumn; that the ship in which S. Paul and his guard sailed was wrecked at Malta; that navigation in the Mediterranean was suspended in the winter; and that it was not until after three months' stay at Malta that a vessel from Alexandria, which had wintered at Malta, afforded the means of continuing the voyage to Italy.

S. Paul and his companions finally disembarked at Puteoli—now Pozzuoli—then a busy thriving sea-port in the northern part of the Bay of Naples, commanding a view of Vesuvius on the opposite side of the bay; but a very different view from that which the mountain now exhibits. At the present day smoke and flame ascend from it incessantly, but in S. Paul's time the crater was clothed with vineyards, and there was only a vague, almost forgotten, tradition that Vesuvius had once been a volcano.

It is an incidental proof of the early diffusion of Christianity in Italy that at this place S. Paul 'found brethren.'² It does not appear that they were directly connected with the Church at Rome; more probably they were Jews of Alexandria, which city had close commercial relations with Puteoli.

By the consent of the centurion Julius, in whose custody S. Paul was, he and his companions were allowed to stay with the brethren at Puteoli a whole week. S. Luke has several times noticed the humanity and courtesy with which this

¹ Romans xv. 24.

² Acts xxviii. 14.

centurion treated his prisoners. At Sidon, in the commencement of the voyage, 'Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go with his friends to refresh himself.'¹ Again, when the ship was wrecked at Malta the soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners lest they should escape, 'but the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose.'² And now the same generous custodian suffers the apostle to tarry seven days with the brethren at Puteoli—an interval which gives time for tidings of his arrival to reach the disciples at Rome.

The journey of S. Paul to the capital lay for the most part along the Appian Way, that 'Queen of roads'—portions of which remain to this day to attest the excellence of Roman engineering. At Appii Forum they were met by Roman disciples, who had travelled forty miles—a considerable distance in those days—to greet their revered teacher. Referring to this touching proof of their devotion and love, S. Luke says, with simple pathos, 'Whom, when Paul saw, he thanked God and took courage,' as well he might.

Arrived at Rome after his long toilsome journey, S. Paul was suffered to hire a lodging and abide by himself, with a soldier to guard him. After three days he called together the chief of the Jews, and explained to them why he had been sent thither a prisoner. They replied, 'We neither received letters from Judæa concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest; for as concerning this sect it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against.'³

Some captious critics maintain⁴ that this portion of S. Luke's narrative is untrue, or, to use their own pedantic word, 'unhistorical.' They say that the language here ascribed to the Jews ignores the existence of the Roman Church, and is inconsistent with facts gathered from the Epistle to the Romans. But there is no foundation for this objection. The Jews in their reply to the apostle do *not* ignore

¹ Acts xxvii. 3.

² Acts xxviii. 21.

³ Acts xxvii. 43.

⁴ See Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 15.

the existence of Christianity. They make two statements, neither of which is there any reason to doubt. First they say that they have not received any report from Judæa about the apostle. That might well be the case, for he had been in prison two years at Cæsarea; and in those days, when life and personal liberty were valued but little, a poor tentmaker, after two years' imprisonment, would be forgotten. The second statement of the Jews is that the new 'sect' was everywhere spoken against. That assuredly was true; for they were regarded with general aversion by their countrymen. They were 'a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions.'¹ This reply of the Jews to S. Paul appears to have been perfectly candid and straightforward; and there is not the slightest reason to doubt that S. Luke has reported it correctly.

On an appointed day these Jews came to the apostle's lodging in great number, 'to whom he expounded the matter testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the laws of Moses, and from the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.'²

S. Paul remained two years in Rome 'in his own hired dwelling, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things for the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him.' During these two years of remarkable activity, the apostle preached constantly, and indited some of his most important epistles. The earliest is probably that addressed to the Philippians. He tells them that his captivity, so far from hindering the progress of Christianity, has had the contrary effect. 'The things which have happened unto me,' he says, 'have fallen out rather to the progress of the gospel, so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole prætorian guard.'³ The prætorian cohorts at this period formed a permanent corps, which acted as Imperial life guards ready to suppress any sudden popular commotion. They were assembled in a permanent camp strongly fortified, and placed in a commanding

¹ Hebrews x. 33.

² Acts xxviii. 23.

³ Philippians i. 12.

situation at the extremity of the Viminal;¹ and it appears to have been customary to deliver state prisoners to the custody of the præfect of the prætorians.²

But though S. Paul was allowed to preach without any hindrance or molestation of the military authorities, he met with opposition in a different quarter. There had been from the beginning two parties in the Christian churches—the one desiring to retain Mosaic ordinances, such as the Sabbath and circumcision, while the other considered that the ceremonial law was now abrogated. This controversy was carried on as bitterly at Rome as at Corinth, or other places where the one party called themselves disciples of Peter and the other the disciples of Paul. Referring evidently to divisions in the Church at Rome, S. Paul says, ‘Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some do it of good-will. The one do it of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel; but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds.’³

From the manner in which he describes and deplors these divisions in the Church, it has been sometimes inferred that they ended in an absolute disruption, and that the apostle was almost entirely deserted by the disciples. This is inferred from a passage in the somewhat later Epistle to the Colossians, which in our Authorised Version runs thus:—

Aristarchus my fellow prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him); and Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you. . . . Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, salute you.⁴

It is a strong objection to this translation that it makes S. Paul contradict himself; for immediately after naming

¹ Ramsay, *Roman Antiquities*, c. 12.

² Dr. Lightfoot (*Philippians*, p. 101) notices that Herod Agrippa, when he was a prisoner at Rome, was delivered in like manner to the custody of this officer, and had indulgences similar to those accorded to S. Paul.

³ *Philippians* i. 15.

⁴ *Colossians* iv. 10

three who only had been a comfort to him, he adds the salutations of three others—Epaphras, Luke, and Demas—in a manner which shows they had not deserted him. But if we adopt a punctuation for which there is high authority,¹ the statement with reference to the first three is ‘of the circumcision these only are my fellow workers,’ that is, that Aristarchus, Marcus, and Justus were the only preachers of Jewish nationality who assisted the apostle, and the others whom he mentions were not of the circumcision.

If this view be adopted, the passage in question is merely an account of some of the ministers who laboured with S. Paul, and has no suggestion of any desertion. Moreover, the salutations in the epistles sent from Rome during his first captivity show beyond doubt that the loving union between the apostle and the Church in that city continued unbroken. To the Philippians he writes, ‘The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar’s household.’ To Philemon he writes, ‘There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus; Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers.’ This language is wholly inconsistent with the idea that the apostle had been deserted by any members of the Christian community. Is it credible that the brethren who had journeyed to Appii Forum in their eager desire to see him and greet him on his perilous journey to Rome would forsake him?

The epistles written during the first captivity at Rome—those addressed to the Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians, and to Philemon—show how the apostle’s life was employed. He was actively pursuing the work of his ministry in the capital, and at the same time exercising a vigilant supervision of distant churches. To each he addresses the counsel which the circumstances of each require. He shows himself to be minutely acquainted with their affairs, and to have means of frequent communication with them by trusty messengers. His captivity was not rigorous. His dearest friends—Timotheus his ‘dearly beloved son;’ Luke, the faithful com-

¹ Lachmann and Meyer. See Conybeare and Howson, *Life of S. Paul*, c. 25. Tischendorf also adopts this punctuation; but it should be added that there are very high authorities for a different punctuation.

panion of his perilous journeys, and other fellow-labourers, were with him. Their daily wants were supplied by the loving care of the churches. S. Paul could no longer work at his trade of tentmaker; but the disciples provided for his subsistence, and he was content with little. 'I have all things and abound,' he says to the Colossians; 'I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.'

The converts at Rome at this time were of the lower classes, probably freedmen and slaves. Onesimus, 'the child whom I have begotten in my bonds,'¹ was a runaway slave. The saints 'of Cæsar's household'² were servants—the humblest members of the vast Imperial establishment. We have no proof that persons of higher rank joined the Christian band until a generation later.³

At length the time of his release arrived. It seems strange at first sight that the long delay of two years occurred before his appeal came on for hearing. But that was the practice of those days.⁴ Nero was not one to concern himself about the liberty of a poor Jew; and there was no writ of Habeas Corpus to accelerate the trial of prisoners.

We know nothing certainly respecting the circumstances of his trial and acquittal beyond this, that he evidently expected to be set at liberty. He tells the Philippians confidently that he shall see them again, and bids Philemon at Colossæ to procure a lodging for him.⁵ Immediately after his release (A.D. 63) these hopes were realised. The apostle saw again the disciples of Philippi and neighbouring churches, and renewed his missionary labours in the East.⁶

The year after S. Paul quitted Rome events occurred there which had momentous consequences for the Christians of that

¹ Philemon 10.

² Philippians iii. 22.

³ Dr. Lightfoot (*Philippians*, p. 21) thinks it not improbable that Pomponia, wife of Plautius, the conqueror of Britain, may have become a convert about this time, but does not express a confident opinion to that effect.

⁴ Josephus (*Life*, s. 3) gives an account of several Jewish priests who, at the very time when S. Paul was a prisoner at Rome, were sent thither to plead before Nero, and were detained in custody several years.

⁵ Philippians i. 26; Philemon 22.

⁶ The question whether the apostle visited Spain in the interval between his first captivity in Rome and the second has been considered in a previous chapter.

city. Nero had now reigned some eight or nine years. At the commencement of his reign he was not the arbitrary despot he afterwards became. He paid some deference to law and the authority of the Senate, and though his private life was horrible to the last degree, in public affairs he observed a semblance of justice. There still existed, says Tacitus, a sort of image of a free state.¹ The conduct of public affairs was entrusted principally to Burrhus and Seneca—prudent counselors; and the first five years of this reign are commonly said to have been distinguished by clemency; though if Tacitus is to be trusted it was a kind of clemency which in modern times would be regarded as intolerable severity.

In the eighth year of his reign, Nero lost the ablest of his counsellors, Burrhus; and Seneca was disgraced, and ceased to have any public authority.

In the same year—that is, the year following S. Paul's release from captivity at Rome—the city was devastated by a tremendous conflagration. It was very commonly believed that the Emperor had given orders to set Rome on fire. Suetonius expressly asserts that he was guilty of this crime, but Tacitus speaks doubtfully, and states that he was unable to ascertain the truth of the accusation. This was the occasion of the first general persecution of the Christians at Rome. Hitherto they had apparently been left unmolested, but in order to divert the suspicions directed against himself Nero spread a report that the Christians had caused the calamity. The passage in Tacitus in which the fire and the subsequent persecutions are described has for us a great interest. It is remarkable to observe how little was known of Christianity by one of the ablest and most thoughtful of Latin historians. His narrative may be quoted here at some length, on account of the exceptional importance of the events to which it relates.

A disaster ensued more terrible and destructive than had ever happened to Rome by the violence of fire. It is not known

¹ 'Quædam imago reipublicæ.'—*Annals*, xiii. 28, referring to the year A.D. 56.

whether this was accidental or caused by the contrivance of the Emperor, for writers differ on the subject. The fire commenced in that part of the circus which is contiguous to the Palatine and Cœlian Hills; where, on account of the inflammable materials with which the shops were stored, the fire speedily gained strength, and being fanned by the wind soon surrounded the whole circus. There was no obstacle to the spread of the conflagration, for the houses were without enclosures and the temples were not protected by walls. The flames as they rushed onward attacked first the lower part of the city, then the higher quarters, and thence descended again with a velocity beyond all control; for the narrow winding streets and irregular buildings of old Rome were easily consumed.

The shrieks of dismayed women, the infirm with age, the feeble children—some struggling for themselves, some trying to help their friends, some dragging the feeble or waiting for them, some lingering, some hurrying—produced helpless confusion. Oftentimes as the fugitives looked back they found the way of escape cut off in front and on either side. Or if they succeeded in reaching other parts of the city—even at a distance—they found themselves in the same peril. At last—bewildered—not knowing what to fly from, which way to go, they crowded the streets or were scattered in the fields. Some who had lost all they possessed and their means of sustenance, and some whose dearest relations they had been unable to rescue, suffered themselves to perish even when they could have escaped. None dared attempt to extinguish the fire, for a multitude of men with threats prevented them, and many threw torches, loudly proclaiming that they had orders, but whether they really had orders or acted thus for the purpose of plundering is not known.

At the time of this disaster Nero was at Antium, and he did not return to Rome until fire approached his own house, which connected the Palatium and the gardens of Mæcenæ. But the flames were not stayed until they had destroyed the Palatium and the house and surrounding buildings.

For the relief of the houseless and destitute people he opened the Campus Martius, the edifices of Agrippa, and his own gardens,¹ and erected temporary structures for a number of

¹ The Campus Martius was the place in which comitia and other public assemblies were held. It contained spacious *septa*, in which the votes of the citizens were taken. These edifices were commenced by Julius Caesar and

poor people. Household utensils were brought from Æstia and neighbouring towns, and the price of corn was reduced to three sesterces. These acts, though popular, did not have the intended effect, for there was a general report that at the very time when the city was burning Nero went on the stage of his private theatre and sang the Fall of Troy, comparing the present calamity to that of ancient times.

At length on the sixth day the fire was stayed at the foot of the Esquiline Hill, by throwing down a vast number of buildings, so that a wide open space interrupted the further progress of the flames. Before the public terror had ceased the fire broke out afresh, but this time in less densely populated parts of the city, so that there was less sacrifice of human life; though there was greater destruction of temples and porticoes dedicated to public recreation. The popular odium on account of the fire was the greater because it broke out in the Æmilian property of Tigellinus, and because Nero seemed ambitious to obtain the glory of building a new city and calling it by his own name. Indeed, of the fourteen regions into which Rome is divided, four remained entire, three were rased to the ground, and in the remaining seven there were left only the remnants of a few houses shattered and burnt.

It would be difficult to estimate the number of houses, blocks of buildings,¹ and temples which were consumed. Some of the most venerable and ancient fanes perished; that dedicated by Servius Tullius to Luna, the great altar consecrated by Evander to Hercules, the shrine devoted by Romulus to Jupiter Stator, the palace of Numa, and the temple of Vesta, which contained the tutelary gods of the Roman people. Treasures gained in many victories, magnificent works of Greek art, ancient monuments of genius—the loss of these, which could not be replaced, the older inhabitants lamented; though the city was rebuilt in renovated splendour.

After describing the vast works undertaken for the purpose

completed by the Consul Agrippa, who also erected other vast public buildings, including the Pantheon, which remains to this day.—Ramsay, *Roman Antiquities*, s. v. 'Campus Martius.'

¹ *Insulæ*. This word in Roman topography is usually understood to mean detached sets of buildings surrounded by streets. But Parker (*Archæology of Rome*, vol. ii. p. 48) contends that *insula* means any separate dwelling. Cicero (*pro Cæl*) calls the detached residence of Clodius *insula*. 'Nunc demum intelligo Clodii insulam esse venalem.'

of reconstructing the capitol with wider and more spacious streets, Tacitus gives a very remarkable account of the first general persecution of Christians at Rome. This celebrated passage is as follows:—

Such were the provisions of human wisdom. Next appeals were made to the gods; and after consultation of the Sibylline books, supplications were made to Vulcan, Ceres, and Proserpine, and propitiatory offerings were made to Juno by the matrons, first in the capitol, and afterwards at the nearest sea coast, whence water was taken for sprinkling the temple and visage of the goddess. The married women celebrated her sacred banquets and vigils. But neither human efforts nor Imperial munificence nor offerings to the gods could stop the evil rumour that the fire had been ordered. To overcome this impression Nero accused and punished with exquisite tortures the persons hated for their iniquities, whom the common people called Christians. The author of that name, Christus, had been put to death by the procurator Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius, and the pernicious superstition repressed for a time again broke out, not only in Judæa, the origin of the evil, but in Rome also, where all things evil and shameful are collected and celebrated. Therefore, those first arrested who confessed, and afterwards, upon their information, a large multitude were convicted, not so much for the crime of burning the city, as for hatred of the human race. Their deaths were treated as sports. Clothed in the skins of wild animals they were torn to pieces by dogs or were crucified, or were set on fire after dark, and burned as lamps by night.¹ Nero offered his own gardens for that spectacle, and held games of the circus, mingling with the crowd in the dress of a charioteer or standing in a chariot. Whence arose a commiseration for these people, however guilty and deserving extreme punishment, because they were slain not for the public good but because of the cruelty of one man.²

¹ That this horrible cruelty was inflicted on others besides Christians appears from a passage in Juvenal, in which he says that if anyone informed against Tigellinus—a favourite of Nero—the informer would be burned to death in this manner—

Pone Tigellinum; teda lucebis in illa
Quâ stantes ardent qui fixo gutture fumant.—*Sat. i. 155.*

² Tacitus, *Annals*, xv. 44. This passage is here translated somewhat freely, for the style of Tacitus is so concise and elliptical that a literal translation would be scarcely intelligible.

This important passage deserves careful consideration. In the first place we may notice the complete ignorance of the historian respecting the nature of the Christian religion. As we have seen, he was similarly ignorant of the Jewish faith. If an intelligent, careful writer like Tacitus could believe that the Hebrews worshipped Saturn and kept the image of a wild ass in the most holy place of their temple, he might also easily believe that the Christ whom he briefly mentions was an ordinary malefactor put to death by Pilate, and that Christianity was one of many superstitions imported from the East. The Jews of Rome had begun to know more about Christianity; but the Roman people generally continued ignorant of its character, and probably regarded the Jewish and the Christian religions as two varieties of the same superstition.

Another statement of Tacitus which ought to be noticed is, the historian adds, that the persons first arrested informed against a multitude of others. It is simply incredible that Christians would inform against Christians. The most probable explanation is that in the first instance numerous arrests were made indiscriminately in the Jews' quarters, that among the persons so taken were some who adhered to the Jewish faith, and that these readily enough informed against the hated Christians. Tertullian expressly states that this was the case. He says, 'the Christians suffered many things from the Jews, who persecuted them, and lastly shed their Christian blood in Rome by the cruelty of Nero.'¹

Some modern writers have disputed the account of the persecution of Christians by Nero. Gibbon thought they were too few and too obscure to attract his notice, and that the real sufferers were Jews, not Christians.² But what ground have we for assuming that the followers of the new faith were too few to attract notice? The salutation at the end of the Epistle addressed to the Romans by S. Paul six years before

¹ Tertullian, *Apology*, c. 21.

² Gibbon suggests that Tacitus confounded Christians with the followers of Judas the Gaulonite. Guizot and Milman regard this suggestion as impossible, as the followers of Judas never went to Rome (Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. by Milman, c. 16).

the persecution are remarkably numerous, and show that the Church at Rome even then was not insignificant, and that subsequently there had been an accession of disciples, due among other things to the exertions of S. Paul during his two years' stay in the city.

Another consideration which renders it extremely improbable that the persecution was directed solely, or even principally against persons of the Jewish creed, is this: that the Empress Poppæa—a Jewess—was then in the very height of her power and favour with Nero, and had successfully exerted herself for the protection of her own people. She had just before presented Nero with a daughter, whom he received with extreme joy. She is described by the historian Josephus as a religious woman, and he gives several instances of favours granted by Nero to the Jews in order to gratify her.¹

The testimony of Tacitus is confirmed by that of a quite independent authority, Tertullian, who appeals to contemporaneous records. 'Examine your own records,' he says. 'There you will find that Nero was the first who wielded the sword of the empire against the Christian religion, then first springing up at Rome. And we justly glory in the fact that our first persecutor was such a man. For whoever knows his character may understand that nothing but what was essentially good would be persecuted by Nero.'² If Tertullian had relied merely on some vague tradition, his statement might be doubted; but, addressing Roman rulers, he appeals to their own archives. Surely he would not ask them to search these documents for something that could not be found in them.³ Another authority to the same effect is Melito, Bishop of Sardis, who, in his address to the Emperor Marcus Antoninus (about A.D. 170), says that up to that time

¹ *Antiquities*, b. xx. c. 8; *Life*, s. 3.

² Tertullian, *Apology*, c. 5.

³ In an article in the *Cornhill Magazine* for 1863 entitled, 'Was Nero a Monster?' it is contended that there is no adequate proof that he caused the fire; but the writer does not appear to dispute that he persecuted the Christians.

The question whether Nero was a monster is quite sufficiently answered in the *Annals* of Tacitus, b. xiii. c. 17, and b. xv. c. 37. Of the horrible subjects of those chapters not even a hint can be given here.

all the Roman Emperors, with two exceptions, had tolerated the Christians—'Nero and Domitian alone, persuaded by certain slanderers, sought to bring false accusations against our religion.'¹

The next important event in the history of Christianity at Rome is the return of S. Paul to that city, and his martyrdom there, four years after the great fire. Christianity had now begun to attract general attention, and had become odious to the Roman rulers. One consequence of this change of feeling was the imprisonment and condemnation of S. Paul. Our information on this subject is derived partly from the Epistles² to Timothy and Titus, and partly from the early Fathers.

The contrast between the two Epistles to Timothy is great. In the first the apostle evidently contemplates a long continuance of his labours. He gives minute directions respecting the affairs of the Church and ministry, and expresses a hope of seeing Timothy shortly. The tone of the Second Epistle is altogether different. Some great trial has now happened. The apostle is at Rome, expecting death. 'I am now poured out like a drink-offering, and the time of my release approaches.'³ During his former captivity in Rome

¹ Eusebius, *Hist.* b. iv. c. 26.

² The dates of the Epistles to Timothy have been the subjects of much controversy, but it is clear that they were written after S. Paul's first captivity at Rome.

In the commencement of the First Epistle, S. Paul says, 'I desired thee to remain in Ephesus when I was setting out for Macedonia.' But Timothy had been the companion of S. Paul in his captivity at Rome. This leaving Timothy in charge of the Church at Ephesus therefore must have happened subsequently to the liberation of the apostle.

As to the Second Epistle to Timothy, the salutations at the end show that it was written at Rome, and the preceding verse (iv. 20) shows conclusively that it could not have been written during the first captivity. For in that verse S. Paul intimates that he had recently visited Corinth and Miletus; whereas we know from the Acts of the Apostles that on the occasion of his appeal to Caesar, he was sent, after two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea, to Rome direct. The date of the First Epistle to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus is probably A.D. 67, and of the Second Epistle to Timothy A.D. 68 (Conybeare and Howson, *Life of S. Paul*, App. ii.).

³ ἐγὼ γὰρ ἤδη σπένδωμαι καὶ ὁ καιρὸς τοῦς ἐμῆς ἀναλύσεως ἐφύσθηκε, 2 Tim. iv. 6.

he had been treated indulgently, living in his own lodging; but on this second occasion he is chained like a felon. 'I suffer hardships with bonds, as a malefactor,' he says. But with that undaunted courage which he maintained to the last he adds, 'but the Word of God is not bound.'¹

Whether the apostle went to Rome voluntarily, and was then arrested, or whether he was arrested in the East, and sent a prisoner to Rome, is not known certainly. But the latter hypothesis is the most probable, for several reasons. When he wrote the First Epistle to Timothy he expected to visit him shortly at Ephesus. This intention was carried into effect, for the apostle speaks himself of his visit to that city.² In the Epistle to Titus (A.D. 67) the apostle announces his intention of wintering at Nicopolis,³ and again gives minute directions respecting the affairs of the Church. He could hardly have had any intention at that time of going to Rome. The general tendency of the letters rather indicates that he contemplated a prolonged superintendence of the Eastern Churches. This argument is not conclusive in itself; but there are other circumstances which indicate that the journey to Rome was hurried and unexpected. He had left behind his parchments, to which he attached great importance; probably because they were needed for his defence.⁴ Surely if the journey to Rome had been commenced deliberately, he would have taken with him these valuable documents. Again, we are told that Alexander the brass worker had 'made several grave charges against him.'⁵ Now this Alexander may have been the same person whom S. Paul states in the First Epistle to Timothy that he had excommunicated;⁶ but whether that be so or not, it is very unlikely that a person in that station of life would have followed S. Paul to Rome to lay an information

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 9.

² 2 Tim. i. 2.

³ Titus iii. 12.

⁴ 2 Tim. iv. 9.

⁵ πολλὰ μοι κατὰ ἐνεδείξατο, 2 Tim. iv. 14. The Authorised Version does not give the meaning of the original. The word ἐνδείξαις is the technical word for the first step in a prosecution. It was the information in writing before the proper magistrate, who then directed the arrest, or held to bail the person criminated, and took the usual steps for bringing him to trial.—Smith, *Dict. of Antiquities*, sub voce.

⁶ 1 Tim. i. 20.

against him. Far more probably Alexander laid the information in Macedonia, and thereupon the apostle was arrested. Moreover, S. Paul warns Timothy to be on his guard against this Alexander.¹ But this warning would be needless if Alexander were at Rome. For how could he, if he were there, injure Timothy, who at this time was in Asia? Other passages point to the same conclusion. S. Paul writes, 'Demas forsook me, having loved this present world, and departed to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.'² Evidently the events here mentioned all occurred together; all the three persons left him at the same time, and that, probably, was the time of his arrest. But there is no reason for supposing that Titus went to Rome. The inference is that all three left him in the East, when he was taken prisoner.

Another statement to the same effect is this, 'This thou knowest, that all in Asia turned away from me;' ³ not, 'all that were in Asia,' but 'all in Asia.' Evidently their turning away occurred in Asia, and there is positively no event of which we have any knowledge to which this general desertion can be referred except the arrest of the apostle.

Some of these considerations may appear minute in themselves, but taken together they justify the inference that S. Paul was arrested in Asia on charges preferred by his enemies there, and was taken to Rome a second time to answer their accusations.

In a passage already quoted,⁴ S. Clement, Bishop of Rome, says of S. Paul, that 'having borne his testimony before the rulers,⁵ thus he departed from the world and went to the holy place, being the greatest pattern of patience.' Who were these rulers? There have been various conjectures on the subject; but if the evidence of the 'Apostolic

¹ 'Of whom beware also, for he greatly withstood our words.' 2 Tim. iv. 15.

² In the Authorised Version the meaning of the passage is obscured: ἐγκατέλιπεν means 'forsook,' not 'hath forsaken'; ἐπορεύθη means 'departed,' not 'is departed.'

³ 2 Tim. i. 15; οἶδας τοῦτο ὅτι ἀπεστράφησάν με πάντες οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ. Here again the Authorised Version is indelicate: 'be turned away from me' does not express the meaning of the original.

⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. viii.

⁵ ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων.

Constitutions' is to be accepted, they were Nero and Agrippa the Second—that Agrippa before whom S. Paul had pleaded at Cæsarea.

The statement in the 'Apostolic Constitutions' is as follows: 'Paul, the teacher of the Gentiles from Jerusalem to Illyricum, was cut off at Rome while teaching the truth by Nero and King Agrippa, being beheaded in Rome itself.'¹ There is no inherent improbability in this statement, and it may at all events be accepted as the record of a very ancient tradition, which may be trusted as to bare matters of fact when there is no motive for falsification. S. Paul undoubtedly appeared before Nero four or five years after the great fire at Rome. Agrippa, shortly after the commencement of the Jewish war, appears to have returned to Rome, and to have resided there generally.² He bore no goodwill to S. Paul, as we see from his conduct in the trial at Cæsarea. Nero also had persecuted the Christians. Therefore there is no improbability in the statement that these two potentates together condemned the Apostle of the Gentiles to death.

Of this trial some few particulars have been given by the apostle himself, and deeply interesting they are. After mentioning the written information of Alexander, which evidently contained the charges on which S. Paul was tried, he proceeds thus:—

At my first defence³ no one took my part, but all forsook me; may it not be laid to their account. But the Lord stood by me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

The apostle speaks of his first defence. Evidently there

¹ *Apostolic Constitutions*, b. viii. c. 32. There are strong reasons for believing that much of the eighth book of the *Apostolic Constitutions* was written in the first century. The subject will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

² The material dates here are: fire at Rome and persecution of Christians there, A.D. 64; commencement of Jewish war, A.D. 67; martyrdom of S. Paul, A.D. 68. Josephus settled in Rome, and his frequent correspondence with Agrippa seems to show that Agrippa also settled in Rome.—*Josephus, Life*, ss. 66 and 76.

³ Or speech in defence; ἀπολογία, 2 Tim. iv. 16.

were several hearings. It was the practice of Nero to hear the accusation and defence on each charge separately, and to give his decision on each before proceeding to the next.¹ In this way trials frequently occupied a long time. At the commencement of the trial of S. Paul all his friends deserted him, but in that time of peril when he stood before a remorseless despot, who by a nod could hurry him off to instant death, he spoke the message of Christianity boldly, just as he had done when he was arraigned before Festus at Caesarea.

On the first charge he was acquitted, and, in his own expressive language, was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. Still he foresaw that this was only a temporary success. In touching language he anticipates his ultimate condemnation:—

I am already being poured out as a drink-offering, and the time of my release is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.²

This time he sees plainly that his enemies will prevail, and he has no longer any hope of deliverance. For thirty years, amid cruel trials and sufferings, he had persevered in his work. But it is over now. He has finished his course. He has kept the faith. With pathetic energy he entreats his beloved son Timothy to hasten to see him. ‘Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me.’ And again he repeats the urgent request, ‘Do thy diligence to come before winter.’

We may be sure that Timothy spared no effort to obey the injunction of his dying master, and there is strong ground for believing that he was able to see him at Rome before his martyrdom.³

¹ Suetonius, *Nero*, 15.

² 2 Tim. iv. 6.

³ The passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews (xiii. 13), ‘Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty,’ is by some authorities supposed to refer to an imprisonment and subsequent release of Timothy in Italy at this time. The Epistle was certainly written in Italy (*see* xiii. 24), and was written before the fall of Jerusalem—for it speaks of the temple services as still going on. In the Authorised Version several verbs in chap. ix. are translated in the past tense, which in the original are in the present tense.

Of the circumstances of the final trial and condemnation we know but little, but the undoubted tradition is that he perished by the sword.¹ Being a Roman citizen he probably was spared the ignominy of the cross, which was reserved for slaves and aliens. He had now reached old age. He had preached the Christian faith amid trials and sufferings which—as it seems to us—the human frame could scarcely endure. Imprisonments, fearful scourgings, tortures, hunger, watching, thirsting, shipwreck, stoning—all these he had survived. But at last deliverance came. The merciful sword-stroke put an end to all this human misery; and at that moment of deliverance we may well believe that some such words as these sounded in his ears, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’

¹ ‘Paul is therefore said to have been beheaded at Rome,’ Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* b. ii. c. 25. The *Apostolic Constitutions*, b. viii. c. 32, state that he was beheaded.

CHAPTER XI.

S. PETER AT ROME.

THE connection of S. Peter with the Church of Rome has been the subject of interminable controversy. It seems almost a paradox to say that we know more about this matter than men did who lived much nearer the Apostolic age: and yet this is certainly the case. Prolonged discussion has had the effect of dispelling errors; successive investigators have corrected the mistakes of predecessors; and besides that, modern discoveries of manuscripts and inscriptions have added not a little information.

All the important passages in writings of the first and second century which relate to this subject will be here collected and discussed.

The earliest writer who mentions the martyrdom of S. Peter is Clement, Bishop of Rome. He was a contemporary of the apostle, and his 'Epistle to the Corinthians' was undoubtedly written before the end of the first century.¹ His testimony is unquestionable. In a passage, part of which has been already quoted, he says:—

But—passing from ancient examples, let us come to the athletes who are nearest to our own times—let us take the illustrious examples of our own age. Through jealousy and envy the fairest and most righteous pillars have been persecuted and come to death. Let us put before our eyes the good apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, underwent not one or two, but many trials, and thus having borne testimony went to the deserved place of glory. Through envy, also, Paul obtained the prize of endurance. Seven times in chains,

¹ *S. Clement of Rome*, ed. by Lightfoot, p. 5.

scourged, stoned, preaching in the East and the West, he received the due honour of his faith; and having taught the whole world righteousness and coming to the goal of the West; and having borne witness before the rulers, thus he passed out of this world and went to the holy place, being the greatest example of patience. To these men living holy lives was added a great multitude of the faithful, who, amid punishment and tortures, suffering from envy became the noblest examples among us. Through envy women, young maidens, girls, were persecuted, and having suffered terrible and wicked tortures, arrived at the fixed goal of faith, and though weak in body received a due reward.¹

The concluding words refer to a general persecution of Christians—both men and women. This might be either the persecution in the reign of Nero, or that in the reign of Domitian. But most probably the earlier event is intended, for the martyrs are described as ‘athletes who are nearest to our own times’—that is, persons who belonged to a preceding generation.²

S. Clement does not expressly state in what place St. Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom. But the omission may be easily accounted for. The epistle is addressed to the Church of Corinth, with which both apostles had maintained close relations. The members of that church would certainly know where the two teachers whom they revered had suffered martyrdom, and Clement might naturally consider it superfluous to mention what was at the time a matter of common notoriety. Many of those whom he addressed were born in the lifetime of the apostles.

The manner in which their deaths are described in connection with other martyrdoms deserves consideration. To them, says St. Clement, ‘was joined a great multitude of the faithful.’³ The form of the expression suggests that all suffered death together, or nearly at the same time; and

¹ Clement, *Epist.* v.

² The date of Nero's persecution was A.D. 64; that of Domitian, A.D. 94-5. The *Epistle of S. Clement* was probably written soon afterwards: the evidence respecting the date of it will be considered hereafter.

³ συνηροίσθη πολὺ πλῆθος. The verb is very expressive, and means literally, ‘were crowded together,’ or ‘united into one mass.’

seems to imply, though not conclusively, that SS. Peter and Paul were victims of the Neronian persecution.

The earliest writer, however, who expressly mentions Rome as the place where both apostles underwent their final suffering is Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, who lived in the middle of the second century. His writings are not extant in a separate form, but some fragments of an epistle addressed by him to the Romans have been preserved by Eusebius, who says of him,¹ 'that he imparted freely, not only to his own people, but to others abroad also, the blessings of his divine labours, and that he was useful to all in the catholic epistle which he addressed to the churches.' In a letter addressed by this Dionysius to Soter, Bishop of Rome (about A.D. 170), occurs this remarkable passage:—

So you also by so much admonition have united the planting of the Romans and Corinthians, which was done by Peter and Paul; for they both, planting us at our city of Corinth, taught alike. Alike also in Italy, teaching in the same place, they suffered martyrdom at the same season.²

The circumstances in which this epistle was written entitle the statements contained in it to absolute credit. It is a public letter written by the chief officer of the Church of Corinth to the Roman Christians, and addressed to their bishop. The matters to which the writer refers were of the

¹ *Eccles. Hist.* b. iv. c. 23.

² Ταῦτα καὶ ὁμοίως διὰ τῆς τοσαύτης νοουθεσίας, τὴν ἀπὸ Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου φυτεύειν γεννηθεῖσαν Ῥωμαίων τε καὶ Κορινθίων συνεκεράσατε. . καὶ γὰρ ἕμφω καὶ εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν Κόρινθον φυτεύσαντες ἡμᾶς, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ εἰς τὴν Ἰταλίαν ὁμόσε διδάξαντες ἐμαρτύρησαν κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν καιρὸν.—Eusebius, *Hist.* b. ii. c. 23. The translation given above in English agrees with Dr. Routh's Latin translation (*Reliquiæ*, vol. i. p. 178), except that ὁμόσε, translated by him 'audacter' (boldly), is here translated 'in the same place.' Notwithstanding the high authority of Dr. Routh, the latter rendering has been adopted here for two reasons: (1) that where a literal translation gives good sense it is to be preferred; (2) because the general tenor of the whole passage suggests a parallel between the labours of the two apostles, and ὁμόσε, = in the same place, is analogous to the preceding word ὁμοίως, = alike.

Dr. Döllinger (*First Age of Christianity*, b. i. c. 2) interprets this passage from Dionysius thus: 'that is, as S. Paul founded the Corinthian, S. Peter founded the Roman Church.' But with great deference to this learned theologian, it is submitted confidently that the original Greek will not bear this interpretation.

deepest interest to both churches, and he refers to them as matters of notoriety. That he should have made these statements without warrant is simply incredible. True it is that he speaks of events which occurred a hundred years before he wrote, but the memory of events so momentous as the ministrations of the two great apostles would surely be kept alive for that period of time.

Let us now look somewhat closely at the passage. The most striking feature is the stress which Dionysius lays on the similarity of the teaching of the two apostles. He shows emphatically that their courses ran parallel. Both taught the same doctrines at Corinth;¹ both taught the same doctrines in Italy; both died at the same period. We lose the force of this passage unless we mark the iteration of the Greek words, which note the similarity of the preaching of SS. Peter and Paul in doctrine, place, and time.

Dionysius says that the two apostles suffered martyrdom at the same season or crisis.² Later Roman tradition represents them to have suffered on the same day,³ but we have not any trustworthy evidence in the earliest writers that this was the case. We may, however, gather from the authorities already cited that they fell during the Neronian persecution, which probably extended over a considerable time.

Even if there were not any other evidence, that which has been given would be sufficient to establish the facts of the preaching and martyrdom of S. Peter at Rome. But there is

¹ It is not stated explicitly in the New Testament that S. Peter taught at Corinth; but there are passages in S. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians which it would be difficult to explain unless that were the case. The main object of that epistle is to rebuke the Corinthians for the divisions which existed among them. 'Each one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ' (1 Cor. i. 25). Again, 'For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas' (1 Cor. iii. 22). The most natural inference from these passages is that Paul, Apollos, and Peter had taught at Corinth. This is the opinion of the eminent Bishop Pearson, *Op. Post.* Diss. i.; cited, Lardner's *History of the Apostles*, xviii. s. 3. ² *καίρῳ*.

³ S. Jerome says that S. Paul was decapitated at Rome on the same day as S. Peter ('eodem die quo Petrus'), in the fourteenth year of Nero, on the Ostian road. But S. Jerome wrote more than three hundred years after the events to which he refers, and some of his statements, as will be shown, are manifestly incorrect.

cogent corroborative testimony. The next authority in order of date is S. Irenæus, who was a disciple of S. Polycarp, who again was a disciple of S. John the Apostle.¹ Irenæus became Bishop of Lyons in Gaul (A.D. 177), and discharged the duties of his office with exemplary diligence and faithfulness. His book against Heresies, written probably about the end of the second century, contains several references to the preaching of SS. Paul and Peter at Rome. In one place he says, 'Matthew issued among the Hebrews in their own tongue a writing of the gospel, when Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome and founding the Church. But after their departure Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, handed down to us in writing those things which had been declared by Peter.'²

Another celebrated passage in the same work refers to 'the greatest and most ancient and universally known church, founded and established at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul,'³ and a little further on is added, 'the blessed apostles thus founding and instituting the church, delivered to Linus the episcopacy for managing the church.'⁴

Caius, a presbyter of Rome and contemporary of Irenæus, says, in a passage preserved by Eusebius :—

I can show the trophies of the apostles ; for if you will go to the Vatican or to the Ostian road, you will find the trophies of those who laid the foundation of this church, and that both suffered martyrdom about the same time.⁵

¹ Eusebius, *Hist.*, b. v. c. 25.

² 'Ita Mattheus in Hebræis ipsorum linguâ scripturam edidit Evangelii cum Petrus et Paulus Romæ evangelizarent et fundarent ecclesiam. Post vero horum excessum Marcus discipulus et interpres Petri et ipse quæ a Petro annuntiata erant per scripta nobis tradidit.'—*Contra Hæreses*, lib. iii. c. 1.

³ 'Maximæ et antiquissimæ et omnibus cognite a gloriosissimis duobus apostolis Petro et Paulo Romæ fundatæ et constitutæ ecclesiæ.'—*Contra Hæreses*, lib. iii. c. 3.

⁴ 'Fundantes igitur et instruantes beati apostoli ecclesiam Lino episcopatum administrandæ ecclesiæ tradiderunt.'—*Ib.*

⁵ Eusebius, *Hist.* b. ii. c. 25. The word 'trophies' is used in the same sense by S. Jerome, 'There too is a holy church ; there are the trophies of the apostles and martyrs.'—*Epistle to Marcellus*. Eusebius (*Ib.* b. vi. c. 20) describes this Caius as a most learned man who, in the time of Zepherinus, held discussion at Rome against the Phrygian heresy.

Hippolytus, Bishop of Portus, who was a disciple of Irenæus, and wrote early in the third century, says, 'Peter preached the gospel in Pontus, and Galatia, and Cappadocia, and Betania, and Italy, and Asia, and was afterwards crucified by Nero in Rome with his head downwards, as he himself desired to suffer in that manner.'¹

Tertullian, writing about the end of the second century, speaks thus with reference to the Church of Rome:—

Happy church, for which apostles poured forth their teaching with their blood, where Peter suffers the same passion as the Lord, where Paul is crowned with the same martyrdom as John² [the Baptist].

In another place, Tertullian, speaking of the Romans, says:—

Peter and Paul bequeathed to them a gospel signed with their blood.³

In another place, the same writer refers thus to the presence of S. Peter in Italy:—

Nor is there any difference between those whom John baptized in the Jordan and those whom Peter baptized in the Tiber.⁴

It might be objected that the apostles died more than a century before Tertullian wrote, and that therefore he merely repeats a tradition. This, however, is not the case. It is quite clear that he derived his knowledge from public documents of the highest authority. This appears by a remarkable passage, in which, after mentioning the martyrdoms of SS. Stephen and James at Jerusalem, he proceeds:—

And if a heretic wishes his confidence to rest on a public record, the archives of the empire will speak as would have the stones of Jerusalem. We read the lives of the Cæsars. At Rome Nero was the first who stained with blood the rising faith. At that time is Peter girt by another, when he is made fast to the cross, and Paul obtains a birth suited to Roman citizenship, when in Rome he springs to life again ennobled by

¹ 'Fragments of Hippolytus,' preserved by the *Chronicon Paschale*.—Ante-Nicene Library, *Hippolytus*, vol. ii. p. 130.

² *De Præscriptione*, xxxvi.

³ *Adv. Marcionem*, lib. iv. c. 5.

⁴ *De Baptismo*, iv.

martyrdom. When I read of these occurrences I myself forthwith learn to suffer.¹

The public records of Rome were kept with the utmost care in the Tabularium or Record-office on the Capitoline Hill. It is utterly incredible that Tertullian, one of the most learned men of his age, would cite such important documents as authorities for statements which were not to be found in them.

It is not necessary to refer to later writers upon the subject. The statements already cited are uniform and consistent. We have a host of witnesses to the same fact, that the two great apostles preached and suffered martyrdom at Rome. The evidence is so ample, and is derived from so many different sources, that it may be safely pronounced indisputable.

Of the circumstances which led to the prosecution and condemnation of S. Peter we are almost entirely ignorant. S. Clement uses a remarkable phrase with reference to the martyrdom of both apostles, saying that they were persecuted through 'jealousy and envy,' and he uses this, or analogous expressions, several times with reference to the condemnation of the apostles and the contemporaneous martyrs. Apparently his meaning is that these martyrdoms were brought about by informers, and this is confirmed by Tacitus, who says that, after the great fires, those who were first arrested informed against others.

The evidence of the death of S. Peter at Rome is ample and conclusive. But there remain to be considered the distinct questions of the duration of his sojourn there, and of his position in relation to the Roman Church.

Firstly, we may inquire how long he abode in that capital. S. Jerome, who wrote in the fourth century, says twenty-five years. He states that S. Peter, after his episcopate and preaching at Antioch, 'went to Rome, and occupied there the sacerdotal chair for twenty-five years, until the last year of Nero, that is, the fourteenth.'² This is the theory which has

¹ *Scorp.* xv.

² 'Romam pergit; ibique viginti quinque annis cathedram sacerdotalem tenuit usque ad ultimum annum Neronis, id est decimum quartum.'—*De Vir.* Ill. c. 1.

been most commonly accepted by the Roman Church; but it is demonstrably erroneous, and has been condemned by some of the most learned writers of that Church. The error of S. Jerome—for an error it undoubtedly is—appears to have arisen in this way. A still earlier writer, Lactantius, had stated that ‘the apostles, for twenty-five years until the beginning of the reign of Nero, had established the foundations of the Church. When Nero reigned Peter went to Rome.’¹ It is supposed that S. Jerome inferred from this that S. Peter resided a quarter of a century in that city.²

It is quite impossible, however, that S. Peter could have been for so long a time in Rome, for he was present at the Council of Jerusalem, which certainly was not earlier than A.D. 50,³ and he suffered martyrdom in the reign of Nero, who died A.D. 68. The interval between these two dates is only eighteen years. But a large further deduction has to be made in computing the time during which S. Peter could have been at Rome. After that council he remained at Antioch a considerable time,⁴ and he probably visited the churches of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, to which his first epistle is addressed.

But though the tradition of an episcopate of twenty-five years in Rome is clearly wrong, the stay of S. Peter in that city must have been something more than a hurried visit.

Clement of Alexandria, writing before the end of the second century, says:—

When Peter had proclaimed the word publicly at Rome and declared the gospel under the influence of the Spirit, as

¹ Cited, Lardner's *History of the Apostles*, xviii. s. 5.

² This is the explanation of Pagi and Balure, both Romanists, cited by Lardner, *ib.*

³ Norris (*Acts of the Apostles*, Appendix, v.) and Conybeare and Howson (*Life of S. Paul*, Appendix iii.) give elaborate investigations of this date. The learned Roman Catholic writer Dr. Dollinger says (*First Age of the Church*), ‘The old tradition of S. Peter’s twenty-five years’ episcopate in Rome arose from placing his journey thither in the year 42, the second of Claudius’ reign, when he was set free from Agrippa’s prison and escaped from Judæa. From that time to his death in 67 is twenty-five years, but, of course, it must not be inferred that he spent all that time in Rome.’

⁴ Epistle to Galatians ii.

there were a great number present, they requested Mark^s, who had followed him from afar and remembered well what he had said, to reduce these things to writing, and after composing the gospel, he gave it to those who requested it of him, which, when Peter understood, he neither hindered nor encouraged it.¹

This is the earliest authority for connecting Rome with the composition of the Gospel of S. Mark. But there are many other writers of the second century who, without expressly mentioning that city, state that S. Mark derived the materials of his gospel from S. Peter. Thus Papias, a hearer of John the presbyter, who was a contemporary of the apostles, writes (about A.D. 116):—

John the presbyter also said this: Mark, being interpreter of Peter, whatsoever he recorded he wrote with great accuracy, but not, however, in the order in which it was spoken or done by our Lord; for he neither heard nor followed our Lord; but, as before said, he was in company with Peter, who gave him such instruction as was necessary, but not to give a history of our Lord's discourses. Wherefore Mark has not erred in anything by writing some things as he has recorded them; for he was carefully attentive to one thing—not to pass by anything that he had heard, nor to state anything falsely in these accounts.²

To this may be added the testimony of Irenæus and Tertullian, who both agree that S. Mark wrote from the instructions of S. Peter; and the statement of S. Clement renders it at least very probable that this event occurred at Rome.

The presence of the apostle in that city has been the subject of so much controversy that it will be interesting to examine the arguments of writers who deny that he was ever there. Some very eminent writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including Scaliger, Salmasius, and Spanheim,³ were of this opinion; but it has been generally discarded in modern times by writers of various religious creeds.

¹ This passage from the *Hypotyposes* of S. Clement is preserved by Eusebius, *Hist. b. vi. c. 14.*

² Eusebius, *Ib. b. iii. c. 39.*

³ Lardner, *History of the Apostles*, xvii.

It has been argued that at the Apostolic Council at Jerusalem, it was arranged that S. Peter should preach to the circumcision and S. Paul to the uncircumcision; and from this it has been inferred that S. Peter's province was strictly limited to preaching to the Jews of the Dispersion. But his mission was not strictly confined to them. On the contrary, we know from the Acts of the Apostles that he associated with the Gentiles at Antioch, and, presumably, taught them. And even if the apostle were a teacher of Jews only there was ample work for him at Rome among his countrymen in that city.

Again, it is said that in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles of S. Paul written at Rome there is not any mention of a visit of S. Peter to that city. The argument derived from mere silence is very fallacious. In the Acts of the Apostles, contemporaneous events most momentous in the history of the Church are omitted, simply because they were not directly within the scope of the narrative. Probably S. Peter was not at Rome during S. Paul's first captivity of two years in that city; but there is not a word in the New Testament to indicate that S. Peter may not have been there previously or subsequently.

Near the end of the Second Epistle to Timothy, in which S. Paul implores him to hasten his journey to him at Rome, it is said, 'only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee.' Surely, it is argued, S. Paul would not have said 'only Luke is with me,' if S. Peter were then in the city.

The answer is, however, very easy. This Epistle to Timothy was written in circumstances of extreme haste and great distress. The apostle had been hurried off from Asia by relentless foes, was kept in the most strict confinement, and was in expectation of speedy condemnation to death. Both apostles suffered martyrdom during the Neronian persecution, which extended over several years;¹ and a probable explanation of the words 'only Luke is with me,' is that

¹ The great fire at Rome occurred A.D. 64, and the death of Nero A.D. 68. Therefore the persecution of Christians, if we are correct in supposing that it commenced soon after the fire, and continued to the end of the reign, must have lasted three or four years.

S. Peter suffered some months before, or some months after S. Paul.

Inferences drawn from brief expressions such as that just noticed are mere conjectures, and cannot prevail against the concurrent testimony of ancient writers of the highest authority, who had ample means of knowledge, and agree as to the death of the two apostles at Rome. That they suffered there during the Neronian persecution is proved as clearly as any fact of ancient history.

Another oft-debated and important question with respect to the life of S. Peter at Rome, is the position which he occupied in relation to the Roman Church? Was he the founder of that Church? Was he the first Bishop of that Church?¹

The books which have been written on these topics would of themselves make a library. But the controversy, like most other controversies, may be greatly narrowed by definition of terms. If by 'founder' is meant 'first preacher,' there is no evidence whatever that either S. Paul or S. Peter was founder of the Church of Rome. When S. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans, expressing a desire to visit them, he addressed a community of Christians already established in that city. Most probably tidings of Christianity were carried thither by Jewish converts who had visited Jerusalem at the first Pentecost after the Crucifixion.

True it is that SS. Peter and Paul are described by Irenæus as founding the Roman Church; but it is evident from the context that the two apostles organised the Church, and gave it a regular constitution by appointing a bishop over it.

Again, to answer the question—whether S. Peter was first Bishop of the Church of Rome—we must know the sense in

¹ The supposition that the whole church of Christ is built on S. Peter as a foundation is inferred from the text, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it' (Matt. xvi. 18). There is a remarkable passage in the *Liturgy of S. James* (c. 33), in which the priest prays 'for the stablishing of Thy holy Catholic Church, which Thou hast founded on the rock of faith, that the gates of hell may not prevail against it.' This seems to show that the numerous churches which adopted this very ancient liturgy considered the 'rock' to be not S. Peter but 'faith.'

which the word 'bishop' is used. If it means resident chief pastor of the Church, it may be very confidently answered that neither S. Peter nor S. Paul exercised that office. There is no evidence whatever that either of them was a resident at Rome, in the ordinary sense of the word, and there is abundant evidence that S. Peter had not any pre-eminence whatever over S. Paul, in relation to the Roman Church. The ancient writers already quoted are careful to rank the two apostles together as doing precisely the same work, in precisely the same manner. There is not one syllable about precedence of the one over the other. S. Clement speaks of both in identical terms, as 'the fairest and most righteous pillars.' S. Ignatius says they both taught alike. S. Dionysius emphatically dwells on the similarity between their lives, labours, and deaths. Irenæus calls the Roman Church 'the greatest and most ancient and universally known church, founded and established at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul.' Tertullian says that 'Peter and Paul bequeathed to them a gospel signed with their blood.'

There is not a hint in any of these ancient writers of any distinction between the offices and labours of these two apostles. The origin of the idea that one of them singly was the founder of the Roman Church, it would be very difficult to ascertain. The earliest writer who expresses himself to that effect is Cyprian of Carthage, who wrote in the middle of the third century. He, in several of his epistles, speaks of Rome as especially 'the See of S. Peter.'¹ But the authority of Cyprian is far inferior to that of the much earlier writers just quoted. He was extremely credulous, and narrates stories of preposterous miracles, of his own silly visions, some of them manifestly fictitious, and of supernatural revelations

¹ Thus he speaks of Cornelius becoming Bishop of Rome in succession to Fabianus, 'when the place of Fabianus, that is, the place of Peter and the grade of the sacerdotal chair were vacant: *cum Fabiani locus, id est, cum locus Petri et gradus cathedræ sacerdotalis vacarent.*'—*Ad Antonian.* Ep. lv. In the *Epistle to Cornelius* he refers to Peter, upon whom by the same Lord the Church had been built the seat of Peter and principal church, whence has arisen sacerdotal unity: '*Petri cathedra atque ecclesia principalis unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est.*'—*Ep.* lix. ss. 7 and 14. These Epistles are here cited according to the Oxford edition.

made to women and 'little boys full of the Holy Ghost.' Besides that, he lived two centuries after the death of S. Peter. Statements of Cyprian cannot outweigh the evidence of writers of far higher authority and repute, who lived much nearer to the Apostolic times. The passages cited from his writings are, however, interesting for this reason, that they show that the practice of considering S. Peter a bishop of Rome had commenced as early as the middle of the third century.

But that this practice was not general at that time is shown conclusively by the fact that Eusebius, who wrote nearly a century later, and is a far more accurate author, did not consider S. Peter to be a bishop of Rome, but a fellow-labourer with S. Paul, as an apostle in establishing the church there. The same historian says² that Linus was the first bishop. This shows that Peter was not regarded as a bishop, and the coupling of his name with that of S. Paul shows that they were regarded as joint founders or organisers of the Church.³ Unless we are prepared to reject the united testi-

¹ *Epist. ix.* Cyprian's *Treatise on the Lapsed* abounds in marvellous stories. For example (c. 26), he states that 'when a certain man who was defiled dared with the rest to receive secretly a part of the sacrifice celebrated by the priest, he could not handle or eat the body of the Lord, but found in his hands when opened that he had a cinder.'

² Eusebius, *Hist. b. iii. c. 2.*

³ Eusebius over and over again adopts this method of reckoning the succession of bishops, and of regarding the two apostles as joint founders of the Roman Church. Thus in *b. iii. c. 31.* 'In the third year of the above-mentioned reign [Trajan's] Clement, Bishop of Rome, committed the episcopal charge to Evarestus, and departed this life after superintending the preaching of the divine word nine years.' Again, in *b. iv. c. 1:* 'After Evarestus had completed the eighth year as Bishop of Rome, he was succeeded in the episcopal office by Alexander, the fifth in succession from Peter and Paul.'

Irenæus (*Heresies, b. iii. c. 3*) adopts the same method of reckoning. He says: 'To this Clement there succeeded Evarestus. Alexander followed Evarestus. Then sixth from the apostles Sixtus was appointed.' It is quite clear that neither Irenæus nor Eusebius had any idea of reckoning S. Peter as a bishop, or of making any distinction between him and S. Paul.

Some writers have endeavoured to get rid of the effect of the ancient authorities which describe SS. Paul and Peter as joint founders of the Church of Rome, by suggesting that S. Paul was founder of a Gentile church and S. Peter of a Jewish there. But there is not a tittle of evidence to support such a theory. On the contrary, it is clear from the Acts of the Apostles that S.

mony of the very earliest authorities on this subject, we must believe that the relations of the two apostles to the Roman Church were precisely similar. It is not merely that writers like Clement and Irenæus are silent as to any pre-eminence of either apostle. The evidence is positive and affirmative; for these writers state in effect that such pre-eminence did not exist.

We lose one of the principal lessons to be derived from the lives of SS. Peter and Paul, unless we observe how those lives ran parallel to each other. No doubt there were great differences between them—differences of character, of mental culture, and at one time even of doctrine.

The one was a native of Tarsus, the rival of Alexandria and Athens as a place of learning; a patrician by birth, for his father was a Pharisee; a Roman citizen by right of inheritance; a pupil of one of the most learned and eminent members of the Jewish Sanhedrim, and afterwards himself a member of that aristocratic assembly; an admirable linguist, who with equal readiness could address a multitude at Athens in Greek, or at Jerusalem in the Hebrew tongue; a man of letters, familiar with Greek poetry, and versed in Rabbinical lore.

The other, the native of a fishing town¹ on the sea of Galilee, was a zealous adherent to Jewish customs, steeped in all the prejudices of Hebrew thought, and scarce able to liberate himself from them.

And yet with all these contrasts there was a remarkable similarity between these two. They were both leaders of men. The one with skilful cultured oratory, the other with rude natural eloquence, commanded the ears of listeners. The one by his mighty power of speech made a Roman Governor tremble, and compelled the silent attention of Greek philosophers. The other at Pentecost addressed a vast assembly of Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven, with such power that they were pricked to the heart. Both

Paul preached at Rome to Jews and Gentiles alike. Besides, it was utterly repugnant to the principles on which the apostles established churches, that there should be two churches in one place.

¹ Bethsaida means a fishing-town.

endured persecution undauntedly. Though they differed ^s more than once, they were companions in life and in death. The one as a Roman citizen suffered by the executioner's sword on the Ostian Way, and the other nearly at the same time endured as an alien the ignominious death of the cross on the Vatican Hill. For more than thirty years these two warriors had fought the battle of Christianity. They contended side by side unto the end, and then—as good comrades should—they fell abreast on the well-fought battle-field.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST CENTURY.

WE have now arrived at a boundary line in the history of the first century of Christianity. The two apostles who, as far as we can judge at this distance of time, exercised the greatest influence in diffusing the new faith, have passed from the earth; their persecutor Nero is dead; the temple at Jerusalem has fallen, and the temple worship has ceased. All these events happened nearly at the same time.¹ It is evident that a new era in the history of the Church has commenced, and that she exists under new conditions. The old question which had sorely tried the faith of her Jewish converts, whether they were to observe the Mosaic rites, has been settled effectually by the force of facts. No longer can Israelites assemble in vast multitudes year by year from all parts of the known world at the great feasts at Jerusalem, for Jerusalem is laid waste, and the temple a heap of ruins.

Again, the death of the persecutor Nero has made a vast difference in the state of the Christian community. Henceforth, until near the end of the reign of Domitian—a space of some twenty-five years—they are suffered to live in the capital in comparative quiet; and though they are victims of occasional cruelties in the provinces, the persecution is not general.

Nero perished miserably by the hand of a slave after the Senate, wearied out by his tyranny, had decreed his death. During the following year (A.D. 69) three competitors—Galba, Otho, and Vitellius—aspired to the Imperial throne, but neither of them obtained undisturbed possession of it. Towards the

¹ The date of Nero's death is A.D. 68. It is generally supposed that SS. Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom a few months previously. The date of the overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus is A.D. 70.

end of the same year Vespasian, who had been sent by Nero to subdue the Jews in Palestine, left his son Titus to complete the task, and set out for Rome, where he was shortly afterwards welcomed as Emperor (A.D. 69-70). As he approached the city the people went out in vast multitudes to meet him, and hailed him with acclamations as their benefactor and deliverer.¹

Vespasian reigned ten years temperately and wisely. He restored the authority of the Senate, reformed the Courts of Justice, and discouraged luxury.

After the triumphant return of Titus from Jerusalem his father associated him with himself in the government of the Empire, and conferred on him various high offices in the State, and on the death of Vespasian (A.D. 79) Titus became sole Emperor. During his too brief government he gained even more popularity than his father. The government of these two princes was a complete contrast to that of their predecessors and immediate successor. Vespasian and Titus appear to have been free from the most hideous vices which prevailed among the Greeks and Romans, and to have made some attempts to raise the standard of public morals.

On the other hand, neither of these two rulers was free from the cruelty and severity which were universal in that age. They did not persecute the Christians. But after the fall of Jerusalem Titus treated the inhabitants of that hapless city with horrible severity, and the aged and infirm were massacred mercilessly. Josephus, who is a panegyrist of Titus, says that he sent a great number of the prisoners to the provinces as presents, that they might be destroyed in the theatres by the sword and the wild beasts.² At Caesarea, on his way back to Rome, Titus celebrated the birthday of his brother Domitian by the slaughter of a vast number of Jews fighting with each other or with wild beasts, and soon afterwards he observed his father's birthday in the same horrible manner.³ Vespasian and Titus erected that vast and most terrible monument of Roman savagery—the Colosseum. From the benches

¹ Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, b. vii. c. 4.

² *Ib.* b. vi. c. 9.

³ *Ib.* b. vii. c. 3. Josephus states that the number of Jews thus slaughtered at Caesarea was 2,500, but he is very apt to exaggerate numbers.

of that enormous amphitheatre nearly one hundred thousand spectators looked down on the sight of fellow-creatures struggling in the throes of death. It was not the mere mob of Rome that thronged to the hideous spectacle. All ranks had their allotted places. There were separate seats for the senators, others for the knights. The Emperor had of course the place of honour; but after him, the best places for seeing this mangling of living human flesh were assigned to delicately nurtured ladies—the Vestal virgins.

To us the delights of the amphitheatre seem absolutely fiendish; but it would be unjust to estimate the Roman character by the measure of modern ideas. The Romans had been a fighting race for centuries, and habit had rendered them indifferent to scenes of bloodshed, which to us would appear sickening.

Titus reigned little more than two years. As was said, the Christians were not persecuted by him, but a different lot awaited them under the rule of his successor Domitian. We are not concerned with the character of this prince, except so far as it affects the history of Christianity. Ancient writers are agreed in representing him as a compound of cruelty, cowardice, and dissimulation. He reigned fifteen years (A.D. 81–96), and during the earlier years his rule was not so terrible as it became subsequently. He affected at first a regard for religious forms, and, though horribly licentious, issued edicts against vice and irreligion. In the latter part of the reign he became the victim of a continual blind terror and suspicious of plots, lived in solitude, and encouraged informers to prefer against the highest nobles and his nearest kindred charges of conspiracy to assassinate him.

Respecting the motives of his hostility to the Christians we have but scanty information. The persecution of Nero appears to have been confined to Rome, and to have been directed against the Christians, not on account of their religion, but on a charge of setting fire to the city. In like manner the motives for the severities practised by Domitian seem to have been political rather than religious. The followers of the new faith were as yet too few and too obscure to attract the ire of the Roman Emperors or people on account of their creed.

The mortal combat between Paganism and Christianity—the struggle for supremacy—did not commence until long after the first century.

Under Domitian, as under his predecessors, Jews were compelled to pay a certain tax called the double drachma,¹ and Christians of the circumcision were indiscriminately liable to this impost. There is a passage in Suetonius which is supposed to refer obscurely to this circumstance. He says² that informations were laid against those who were not publicly assessed but led the life of Jews, or who, by concealing their origin, avoided payment of the tribute imposed on that race.

Christians of the circumcision were liable to this impost like the rest of the Jews; but there is very little to warrant the conclusion that what is called the Domitian persecution was a mere conflict with the tax-collector. Christians were not likely to systematically evade payment of dues to the State, and still less likely to incur the punishment of exile on that account.

The earliest extant reference to this persecution is in the writings of Melito, Bishop of Sardis. Addressing the Emperor Antoninus Verus (about A.D. 160), he says that of all the predecessors of that Emperor 'Nero and Domitian alone sought to criminate our religion at the instigation of certain malevolent persons, from whom, by the unjust practice of laying informations, the calumny was spread. But your pious progenitors corrected their error by frequent rescripts reproving those who attacked our religion.'³

¹ This was the half shekel originally payable to the Temple at Jerusalem by all Jews. Thus it was paid by Christ at Capernaum (Matt. xvii. 24).

By far the largest part of the Temple tribute was obtained from this source. After the overthrow of Jerusalem Vespasian decreed that this di-drachma or half-shekel should become a Roman tribute.

² 'Deferebantur qui vel improfessi Judaicam viverent vitam, vel dissimulatâ origine imposita genti tributa non pependissent.'—*Domit.* 12. The 'professio,' it has been explained in a former chapter, was a declaration by each person liable to be taxed, of his age, property, and other particulars, from which the amount of his assessment was calculated, and *improfessi*, it is submitted, were those persons who neglected to make this declaration.

³ This passage is preserved by Eusebius (*Hist.* b. iv. c. 26). In another place (*Hist.* b. iii. c. 18) Eusebius says, 'Domitian, having exercised his cruelty against many, and unjustly slain no small number of noble and illustrious men at Rome, and having without cause punished vast numbers of honourable men

Tertullian, a somewhat later writer (about A.D. 204), refers to the persecution of Domitian, and shows that it was only temporary, but gives no clue to the motives of the persecutors. In a passage, part of which has been already quoted, he says:—

Consult your records: you will there find that Nero was the first who wielded the sword of empire against the Christian religion, then first springing up in Rome. And we justly glory in the fact that our first persecutor was such a man; for whoever knows his character may understand that nothing but what was excellently good would be persecuted by Nero. Domitian also, who resembled Nero in cruelty, made a similar attempt, but retaining some sentiments of humanity, soon desisted, and even permitted those whom he had banished to return.¹

In another passage² Tertullian describes the events somewhat differently, and states that some of the exiles returned in the reign of the succeeding emperor, Nerva. There is not, however, any necessary contradiction between the two statements. Some of the exiles may have received permission to return in the reign of Domitian, and others in the reign of Nerva.

Domitian appears, however, to have put several persons to death on the ground that they were Christians—and among them his own nephew. Referring to the last year of the reign, the fifteenth, Dion Cassius says: ‘In the same year Domitian put to the sword many others, and among them Flavius Clemens the consul, although he was his cousin, and had for his wife Flavia Domitilla, a kinswoman of the Emperor. There was brought against them both a charge of atheism, on which also many others who lived according to Jewish customs were condemned;’³ and some were put to death, and others deprived at least of their property. But Domitilla was only banished to Pandateria.’

It is true that the historian does not expressly state that

with exile, established himself as the successor of Nero in his hatred and hostility to God.’

¹ Tertullian, *Apology*, c. 5. Tertullian speaks of only one persecution. But the *Martyrdom of Ignatius* (c. i.) mentions ‘storms of many persecutions under Domitian.’ ² Cited by Eusebius, *Hist.* b. iii. c. 20.

³ ἐπηνέχθη δὲ ἀμφοῖν ἐγκλημα ἀθεότητος, ὅφ’ ἧς ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ Ἰουδαίων ἔθνη ἐξοκέλλοιτο κατεδικάσθησαν. Dion. lxvii. 14.

the persons condemned were Christians; but there are valid reasons for concluding that such was the case. In the first place, the Jewish religion was tolerated at Rome, and the Jews were not charged with 'atheism;' though that charge was commonly preferred against Christians.¹ In the second place, other ancient writers distinctly state that Flavia Domitilla professed Christianity. Thus Eusebius says: 'Bruttius writes that many Christians suffered martyrdom under Nero, among whom Flavia Domitilla, niece of the consul Flavius Clemens, was banished to the island Pontia because she declared herself to be a Christian.'²

One of the most remarkable triumphs of archæological science is the recent discovery of a Christian monument of this Flavian family near the Ardeatine Way. Flavia Domitilla, who was banished by Domitian on account of her faith, possessed land about a mile and a half south of Rome on the road to Ardea. On this land there is a building which has now been identified as a monument of some member of the Flavian family who lived and died in the days of Domitian. It stands close to the highway, and has a front of fine brickwork with a cornice of terra-cotta, and contains a gallery with niches for four or five sarcophagi. The costliness of the construction shows that it belonged to a wealthy family; and the character of architecture and paintings prove that it was built in the first century. This building serves as a vestibule to underground chambers, which are supposed to have been used by the mourners assembled at funerals. At a later date these chambers were connected by galleries with the catacomb, called the 'Cœmeterium Domitillæ.' The main facts seem to be well established that we have here a burial place of the Christian Flavii, that it

¹ Thus Justin Martyr says that the Christians deny that the demons are gods, and adds, 'Hence it is that we are styled Atheists.' *Apology*, c. 5. So also in the ancient epistle of the Church of Smyrna concerning the martyrdom of S. Polycarp, it is said the Christians were condemned as Atheists. See c. 3 and c. 9.

² Eusebius, *Chron.* sub anno 95, cited, Lightfoot's *Philippians*, p. 22. Eusebius makes precisely the same statement in his *History*, b. iii. c. 18. Dr. Lightfoot thinks this Bruttius was probably a contemporary of Pliny.

Eusebius calls Flavia Domitilla the niece of Flavius Clemens; but Dion styles her his wife. This divergence, which is not important for our present purpose, is discussed by Dr. Lightfoot in the work just cited.

stands on ground which once belonged to Flavia Domitilla, and was probably granted by her as a cemetery for people of her own creed.¹

The whole story of Flavius Clemens and his wife is an important part of the early history of Christianity. A new epoch is marked. S. Paul had said, 'Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called,' but now two illustrious members of the Imperial family have openly adopted the new religion; and we may reasonably assume that other persons of rank adopted it also.

The recall, in the reigns of Domitian and his successor Nerva, of persons banished on account of their religion, proves that Christianity was not definitely proscribed by those Emperors.² Still it stood in a precarious position. Nerva reigned less than two years (A.D. 96-98). His successor Trajan pursued a policy of toleration to some extent; but his famous correspondence with the younger Pliny shows that the Christians were liable to terrible trials, at least in the distant provinces. The date of this correspondence is about A.D. 111.

¹ This very remarkable discovery is due to the researches of the eminent archaeologist, De Rossi. Of the evidence by which he demonstrates the connection of this monument with the wife of Flavius Clemens there are interesting accounts in the Appendix to *S. Clement of Rome* by Dr. Lightfoot, p. 257, and the valuable work of Dr. Northcote, *Roma Sotterranea*, vol. i. c. 3.

² The position of the Christians in Rome in the reign of Domitian is curiously illustrated by a passage in Tertullian, the importance of which does not appear to have been sufficiently noticed. Tertullian says (*Ad Scapulam*, c. 4), 'Severus, the father of Antonine, was graciously mindful of the Christians, for he sought out the Christian Proculus, surnamed Torpacion, the steward of Euodias, and in gratitude for his having once cured him by anointing, he kept him in his palace till the day of his death. Antonine, too, brought up as he was on Christian milk, was intimately acquainted with this man. Both men and women of highest rank, whom Severus knew well to be Christians, were not merely permitted by him to remain uninjured, but he even bore distinguished testimony in their favour, and gave them publicly back to us from the hands of a raging populace.'

Antonine, who afterwards became Emperor, was born near Rome in the reign of Domitian (A.D. 86), and belonged to a wealthy family. The remarkable passage just quoted shows, (1) that Antonine was nursed by a Christian slave, (2) that in the reign of Domitian there were Christians in the highest ranks of society; (3) that they were liable to persecution by the populace, and occasionally found protection from patricians.

Pliny the younger—a man of undoubted reputation for learning, benevolence, and morality—was appointed by Trajan to be proconsul of Pontus and Bithynia. In this capacity he was accustomed to seek advice from his Imperial master with reference to the affairs of the provinces committed to his care. Much of this correspondence has been preserved: and it is creditable both to the proconsul and to the Emperor. It shows on the one hand that Pliny tried to govern righteously, and on the other that Trajan was a judicious and painstaking adviser.

In a most memorable letter Pliny asks the Emperor how he ought to deal with accusations against Christians. Every part of this letter deserves attentive consideration, for almost every sentence gives precious information respecting the observances, social position, and numbers of Christians, and their influence in destroying Paganism. The following is a close translation¹:—

It is my practice, my lord, to refer my perplexities to you. For who can better resolve my doubts or instruct my ignorance?

I have never been present at the examination of Christians, and therefore I do not know how or how long it has been customary to punish them or examine them. I have hesitated not a little whether there should be some distinction of age or whether there should be no distinction between the weak and the strong; whether pardon should be given on repentance, or whether retractation should not avail anyone who has once been a Christian; whether the profession itself, unaccompanied by crimes, or crimes accompanying that profession, should be punished.

Meanwhile, with regard to those Christians who have been prosecuted before me, I have adopted the following method: Those who confessed I have interrogated a second and third time, threatening punishment; if they persevered I ordered them to be led out to punishment; for I did not doubt that, whatever it was that they confessed, their stubbornness and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished. There were others

¹ The letter is so important that the original text is given as a note to this chapter.

under the like infatuation, whom I have directed¹ to be sent to Rome because they were Roman citizens.

In consequence of these proceedings, as is generally the case, the accusations became more frequent, and several other instances occurred. An unsigned information was laid before me, which contained the names of many persons. I dismissed those who denied that they had been Christians when they had repeated after me an invocation to the gods and to your image (which for this purpose I had ordered to be brought in with the images of the gods), and had supplicated with frankincense and wine, and reviled Christ, which, it is said, that nothing will compel Christians to do.

Others named by an informer said they were Christians, but presently denied it. They declared that they had been such, but had recanted, some three years ago, some longer, some even twenty years ago. All these also venerated your image and the images of the gods, and reviled Christ. But they affirmed that the extent of their fault or error had been this, that they were accustomed to meet on an appointed day before daybreak and to sing in an alternate method a hymn to Christ as a god and to bind themselves by a sacrament, not for any criminal purpose, but that they would not commit theft, robbery, or adultery, or breach of faith or trust. After these things it was their custom to depart and to meet again to partake of a common innocent meal. But this they gave up after my edict, in which by your orders I prohibited clubs. Wherefore I thought it necessary to examine even by torture two slave girls who are called deaconesses as to the truth of these matters. But I discovered nothing but an erroneous and fanatical superstition. Therefore, postponing the inquiry, I have hastened to consult you. It has seemed to me a matter worthy of consultation chiefly on account of the number of persons in danger. Many of all ages and ranks and of both sexes are and will be in danger. The contagion of this superstition pervades not only cities, but villages and even farms, which, however, it seems possible to restrain and correct. Certainly the temples, which had been almost deserted, have begun to be frequented; the sacred rites, long intermitted,

¹ 'Adnotavi in urbem remittendos' = I have made a note on the informations. Evidently it was his practice to make notes on papers submitted to him of his directions in each case. He refers to the same practice when he was a treasurer at Rome - 'subnoto libellos,' b. i. Ep. 10.

are renewed; and fodder, which was seldom purchased before, is now supplied for the animals to be sacrificed, from which it is easy to see that a great number of men might be reclaimed if pardon were offered to them.

In considering this remarkable letter we must bear in mind the situation and condition of the provinces which Pliny governed. Upon the northern shores of the Euxine Sea were Pontus and Bithynia, two fertile countries of Asia Minor, which were added to the Roman Empire in the century preceding the Christian era. They contained, besides the native inhabitants, a numerous Jewish population, and Christian congregations had been formed in them in Apostolic times.

This is evident from the fact that S. Peter addressed his epistle to the disciples of the Dispersion in Pontus and Bithynia among other places, and that S. Paul at one time intended to visit Bithynia with his companions Silas and Timothy.¹

It is also clear that when S. Peter wrote these congregations were subject to persecution, for he repeatedly exhorts them to be patient under their affliction, and describes it as a 'fiery trial among you which is upon you to prove you.'² There were two classes of persecutors, Jews and Gentiles, who alike detested the new religion.

The religious animosities which existed in S. Peter's time were equally fierce half a century afterwards, when Pliny wrote his memorable letter. Informers were busily at work to denounce the converts. The Roman Governor cared nothing about the religious question. What he was anxious to ascertain was whether there was any plot against the government. The Emperor had, it appears, prohibited clubs or guilds³—obviously from political motives. These institutions were somewhat like our friendly societies, and were established for convivial, or charitable or other purposes, but might be made the means of political agitation. Pliny therefore considered it his duty to prohibit the love feasts, or common meals which

¹ 1 Pet. i. 1. Acts xvi. 7.

² 1 Pet. iv. 12. πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῶν γινωμένη. The translation in the Authorised Version, 'the fiery trial which is to try you,' is misleading, for it suggests a future, not a present trial.

³ Hetaeiai, in Greek, ἐταῖραι.

the Christians ate together in the latter part of the day; and they agreed to relinquish them. But the Governor did not require them to give up their morning worship.

The praise which S. Peter gives to the Churches of Pontus and Bithynia is unconsciously repeated by Pliny. The apostle testified that the disciples no longer 'walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, carousings, and abominable idolatries.' The proconsul declared that they bound themselves by a sacrament to abstain from theft, robbery, adultery, and fraud, and that nothing could force them to deny their Lord.

The organisation of the churches in Pliny's time was evidently very complete. They had their different offices and functions, including those of deaconesses, set forms of prayer, antiphonal singing, and regular times and places of assembly for the celebration of the Eucharist. It seems strange to us that so humane a man as Pliny could have punished people who by his own account led such blameless lives; but we must not judge him by the standard of modern morals. To a Roman Governor the most heinous of sins was disobedience. The slightest resistance to the Imperial authority—no matter what might be the motives—was an offence absolutely unpardonable. In truth the vast Roman Empire, which included numerous hostile races, could not have been held together on any other principle. Therefore a proconsul would consider it his first duty to repress the slightest signs of disaffection. Men who hesitated to reverence the image of the Emperor were rebels, and must suffer the punishment of rebellion.

The conduct of Pliny throughout these persecutions was actuated almost entirely by motives of State policy. It is true that at the end of the epistle he refers to the desertion of the temples and neglect of worship of the gods—and this incidentally shows how widespread the influence of Christianity had become—but his main design was to check conspiracy against the State. The examination of the deaconesses by torture evidently had this object. About their creed he expresses no concern, but treats it with contempt as an absurd and extravagant superstition. The Emperor takes substantially the same view in his reply, which is as follows:—

You have pursued the right course, my Secundus,¹ in examining the cases of those persons who were accused before you as Christians. It is not possible to lay down a general rule which shall have the effect of a regular rescript. They are not to be sought after, but if accused and convicted they are to be punished. Nevertheless, if anyone denies that he is a Christian and makes that matter clear by supplicating our gods, however much he may have been suspected in time past, let him be pardoned on his repentance. Informations laid without the name of the informer ought not to be allowed in any case whatever. That is one of the most pernicious practices, and is not suitable to our times.

That is to say, that Pliny is to avoid persecution as far as possible—but if cases of obstinate nonconformity are brought under his direct notice he must punish the offenders. However, he is to give them every opportunity of retracting, and he is not to take any notice of anonymous informations.

Tertullian, writing in the next century, calls this a self-contradictory decision, because on the one hand it assumes the innocence of the Christians by directing that they shall not be sought after, and on the other hand assumes their guilt by directing that they should be punished.² But from the Emperor's point of view the guilt of Christians would consist, not in their religion, but their contumacy and disobedience to the civil magistrate. As long as they did not exhibit that fault Trajan was content to let them practise their religious rites without molestation.

At the time when Trajan wrote he was unwilling to issue any general edict on this subject. He appears, however, to have done so shortly afterwards. In the famous 'Ancient Syriac Documents' there is a version of such an edict, which has all the appearance of genuineness. These Syriac documents undoubtedly contain much that is spurious, but the version in question is authenticated by the subscription of two notaries in the presence of two attesting witnesses, 'as the

¹ Pliny's agnomen was Secundus.

² 'O sententiam necessitate confusam! Negat inquirendos ut innocentes et mandat puniendos ut nocentes.'—*Apolo.* c. 2.

ancient law of the ancient kings prescribe,'¹ and we cannot suppose that a document of this formal character, purporting to be a translation of an edict of the Emperor, is spurious. In the translation from the Syriac it is as follows:—

Since our majesty gave orders that there should be a persecution against the people of the Christians, we have heard and learned from our sharirs, which we have in the country of the dominion of our majesty, that the people of the Christians are men who avoid murder, and sorcery, and adultery, and theft, and bribery, and fraud, and those things from which even the laws of our majesty require punishment for such as do them. We, therefore, by the justice of our rectitude have given command that, on account of these things, the persecution of the sword shall cease from them, and that there shall be rest and quietness in all our dominions, they continuing to minister according to their custom, and that no man shall hinder them. But it is not that we show affection towards them, but towards their laws which agree with the laws of our majesty. And if any man hinder them after this our decree, that sword which is ordered by us to pass upon those who neglect our decree, the same have we ordered to pass upon those who slight this decree of our clemency.

This edict was published in Edessa, a city of Mesopotamia, which is near Pontus, and it appears by the context that the decree was sent not only to the two provinces over which Pliny presided, but also to many other Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire.

At the time when the edict was read at Edessa a cruel persecution of the Christians was going on, and Barsamya, the bishop of that city, was about to be led to torture at the very time when the edict arrived. But after it was read Barsamya was released. 'And when he was entered into the Church—he and all the people that were with him—he stood up and prayed and blessed them, and dismissed them to their

¹ The attestation runs thus: 'But I, Zenophilus and Patrophilus, are the notaries who wrote these things; Diodorus and Euterpes, sharirs [magistrates?] of the city bearing witness with us by setting their hands, as the ancient laws of the ancient kings prescribe.'—*Ancient Syriac Documents*, translated by Cureton, p. 71.

houses, rejoicing and praising God for the deliverance which He had wrought for them and for the Church.'¹

The fire of persecution broke out again from time to time during the remainder of the reign of Trajan. Thus Ignatius, a disciple of the Apostle John and Bishop of the Church of Antioch, in his letters (written probably about A.D. 110) speaks of a persecution that had just ceased in that city.² He himself was condemned to be thrown to the wild beasts at Rome; and this fearful sentence was pronounced at Antioch by that very Emperor Trajan who had promulgated an edict in favour of toleration. How are we to reconcile these inconsistencies? The only possible explanation is that already given, that the motives of the Emperor were political, and that he deemed it a stern necessity to repress the least resistance to his authority.

But these severe measures were almost always directed against the subject races who did not possess the privilege of Roman citizenship. There were ancient laws of Rome which restrained the power of inferior magistrates to inflict severe punishments on the citizens. The 'Lex Valeria,' passed five centuries before the Christian era, prohibited magistrates from putting to death or scourging a Roman citizen who claimed the right of appeal—and this law was regarded by the Romans as a Magna Charta of their freedom. Other laws passed subsequently—the Porcian and the Sempronian—were to the same effect. After the fall of the republic constitution rights almost ceased to exist, and the power of the Emperors was absolute and supreme. Yet even they did not dare to abrogate one of the dearest privileges of Roman citizens—the right of appeal from a sentence of death or flagellation.

It was this privilege which protected S. Paul from the lashes ordered by the chief captain Lysias. Many times

¹ *Ancient Syriac Documents*, p. 71. Dr. Curetón, by reference to the Roman consuls, in whose consulate these transactions occurred, fixes the date to be A.D. 106.

² In the Epistle to the Philadelphians (c. 10) he writes: 'I am told that through your prayers and bowels which ye have in Christ Jesus, the church which is in Antioch of Syria is at peace.' In his Epistle to the Smyræans (c. 11) he makes a similar statement.

before the apostle had been scourged by the Jews, but a Roman Governor dared not inflict that punishment on a citizen uncondemned.¹ In the same way his right of appeal to Cæsar was recognised by Felix. The letter of Pliny just quoted is another instance to the same effect, for he states that those Christians who claimed the right of citizenship he directed to be sent to Rome. The privilege existed long after that time. In the account of the martyrdoms at Lyons in the latter part of the second century, we are told with respect to some of the martyrs that the Governor, learning that they were Roman citizens, wrote to Cæsar for directions respecting them, and subsequently received orders that they should be beheaded.²

It would be beyond the scope of this history to describe at any length the martyrdoms of the second century. Doubtless they were often instigated by popular frenzy and religious animosities. The superstitious fears of the heathens were aroused. Their temples and their gods began to be neglected. When natural misfortunes occurred it was the fashion to attribute them to the Christians. 'If the Tiber arises against the walls of the city,' says Tertullian, 'or the Nile does not overflow its banks; if there is drought, or earthquake, or famine, or pestilence, the cry at once is, *Take the Christians to the lions.*'³ There was not, indeed, any universal proscription of Christianity. Still horrible cruelties were inflicted upon the Christians in various parts of the empire.

The legal position of the Christians in the first and second centuries differed materially from that of the Jews. As we have seen, the Jews had the benefit of various edicts by which the Roman government distinctly and formally recognised their religious liberty. But the Christians generally had no such charters of toleration. The result was that they were at the mercy of their rulers, and were often sacrificed irregularly by complaisant judges to popular fury. 'Most worthy judges,' exclaims Tertullian in a burst of righteous indignation,⁴ 'ye

¹ 'And when they had tied him up with the thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?'—Acts xxii. 25.

² Eusebius, *Hist. b. v. c. 1.*

³ *Apology*, c. 40.

⁴ *Apology*, c. 50.

will be in still greater favour with the people if ye sacrifice the Christians to their fury. Torment, rack, condemn, crush us ; for your injustice is the proof of our innocence,' and then he adds that memorable prophecy which time has fulfilled :—

Yet the most exquisite cruelty which ye can devise avails you nothing, but rather induces the more to become Christians. As often as we are cut down by your persecutions we spring up more abundantly. The blood of Christians is the seed of the faith.

NOTE TO CHAPTER XII.

C. PLINIUS TRAJANO IMPERATORI (C. PLINII ET TRAJANI EPIST. 96).

Solemne est mihi, domine, omnia de quibus dubito ad te referre. Quis enim potest melius vel cunctationem meam regere vel ignorantiam exstruere? Cognitionibus de Christianis interfui nunquam: ideo nescio quid et quatenus aut puniri soleat aut quæri. Nec mediocriter haesitavi sitne aliquod discrimen ætatum, an quamlibet teneri nihil a robustioribus differant, detur pœnitentiæ venia, an ei qui omnino Christianus fuit desisse non prosit, nomen ipsum, si flagitiis careat, an flagitia cohærentia nomini puniantur. Interim in iis qui ad me tanquam Christiani deferebantur hunc sum secutus modum. Interrogavi ipsos an essent Christiani. Confitentes iterum ac tertio interrogavi supplicium minatus; perseverantes duci jussi. Neque enim dubitabam, qualecumque esset quod faterentur, pertinaciam certe et inflexibilem obstinationem debere puniri. Fuerunt alii similis amentiae quos, quia cives Romani erant, adnotavi in urbem remittendos.

Mox ipso tractatu, ut fieri solet, diffundente se crimine, plures species inciderunt. Propositus est libellus sine auctore multorum nomina continens. Qui negabant esse se Christianos aut fuisse, cum, præeunte me, deos appellarent et imagini tuæ, quam propter hoc jusseram cum simulacris numinum adferri, ture ac vino supplicarent, præterea male dicerent Christo, quorum nihil posse cogi dicuntur qui sunt re vera Christiani, demittendos esse putavi. Alii ab indice nominati esse se Christianos dixerunt et mox negaverunt; fuisse quidem, sed desisse, quidam ante plures annos, non nemo etiam ante viginti quoque. Omnes et imaginem tuam deorumque simulacra venerati sunt et Christo male dixerunt. Adfirmabant autem hanc fuisse summam vel culpæ suæ vel erroris, quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem, seque sacramento non in scelus aliquid obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent. Quibus peractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse, rursusque cocundi ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen et innoxium; quod ipsum facere desisse post edictum meum, quo secundum mandata tua hæterias esse vetueram. Quo magis necessarium credidi ex duabus ancillis, quæ ministræ dicebantur, quid esset veri et per tormenta

querere. Nihil aliud inveni quam superstitionem pravam et inmodicam. Ideo dilata cognitione ad consulendum te decucurri. Visa est enim mihi res digna consultatione, maxime propter periclitantium numerum. Multi enim omnis ætatis, omnis ordinis, utriusque sexus etiam vocantur in periculum et vocabuntur. Neque civitates tantum sed vicos etiam atque agros superstitionis istius contagio pervagata est; quæ videtur sisti et corrigi posse. Certe satis constat prope jam desolata templa cœpisse celebrari et sacra sollemnia diu intermissa repeti, pastumque venire victimarum, cujus adhuc rarissimus emptor inveniebatur. Ex quo facile est opinari quæ turba hominum emendari possit, si sit pœnitentiæ locus.

TRAJANUS PLINIO S.

Actum quem debuisti, mi Secunde, in excutiendis causis eorum qui Christiani ad te delati fuerant, secutus es. Neque enim in universum aliquid quod quasi certam formam habeat constitui potest. Conquirendi non sunt. Si deferantur et arguantur, puniendi sunt, ita tamen ut qui negaverit se Christianum esse idque re ipsa manifestum fecerit, id est, supplicando diis nostris, quamvis suspectus in præteritum, veniam ex pœnitentia inpetret. Sine auctore vero propositi libelli in nullo crimine locum habere debent. Nam et pessimi exempli, nec nostri sæculi est.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH.

WHEREVER men combine together for a common object they must have rules; and every society or community must have a system of government. Whether the association be for secular or religious purposes, the members of the association must submit to laws and regulations; for without them they cannot act in concert.

This general proposition—so general as to be almost a truism—is applicable with especial force to the earliest Christian Churches. Situated as they were among hostile people, and composed for the most part of poor illiterate peasants and slaves, discipline and order were essential to their very existence.

The form of government adopted in the Apostolic age has been the subject of fierce controversy in later times, and the subject has seldom been discussed dispassionately; for the disputants have generally been more eager to defend a position than to examine the strength of it.

And yet if we clear away the extraneous matter involved in these controversies it is possible to narrow them to very simple issues. Undoubtedly the question most eagerly debated is whether three orders of ministers—bishops, priests, and deacons—existed in the Apostolic age. That those orders existed very soon afterwards is scarcely denied. The evidence on that point is so ample and abundant that if we reject it we must be prepared to give up all historical evidence whatever. But the really debatable point is whether this establishment of three orders in the Church was an innovation of the second century, or whether it was sanctioned by the apostles themselves.

The difficulty of the inquiry arises partly from the fact

that the early church was in a state of transition and development, and partly from an inexact use of terms, which subsequently obtained a strict technical meaning. For instance, the word 'bishop' has now, and long has had, but one meaning. It designates an officer of the Church who possesses authority to ordain ministers and a control over many churches in his diocese. But in the New Testament the word 'episcopus,' or bishop, is not once used in this sense. There are only three places in which the word is employed to designate an officer of the Church. The Epistle to the Philippians is dedicated to the saints at Philippi, 'with the bishops and deacons.'¹ In the First Epistle to Timothy it is said that 'if a man seek the office of a bishop he desireth a good work;'² and in the Epistle to Titus, after referring to the ordination of 'elders in every city,' S. Paul adds, 'for the bishop must be blameless, as God's steward.'³ In all these passages it is quite clear from the context that 'bishop' means the same thing as 'presbyter' or 'elder.'

These are all the passages in the New Testament in which the word 'bishop' designates a clerical office.⁴ The practice of regarding presbyters as bishops or overseers of congregations existed throughout the Apostolic age, and long afterward. Thus Clement of Rome, writing in the latter part of the first century, uses the word 'bishop' in this sense,⁵ and so does Clement of Alexandria, who wrote in the latter part of the second century. He narrates that the Apostle S. John on one occasion confided a youth to the care of a certain 'bishop' to be instructed by him, and immediately afterwards adds, 'The presbyter, taking the youth home that was committed to him, educated, restrained, and cherished him, and at length baptised him.'⁶ At a still

¹ Philippians i. 1.

² 1 Tim. iii. 1.

³ Tit. i. 7. It is remarkable that the Greek word for a sacrificing priest (*ιερεύς*) is never used in the New Testament to designate Christian presbyters or priests. But this word is used in the Acts of the Apostles (xiv. 13) to denote the priest of Jupiter, and in various places in the New Testament (e.g. Matthew xii. 4; Acts vi. 7, &c.) to denote Jewish priests.

⁴ The word 'bishop' occurs in one other place (1 Peter ii. 25), where Christ is called 'the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.'

⁵ *Epistle to the Corinthians*, c. 44.

⁶ Euseb' *us*, *Hist.* b. iii. c. 23.

later period, near the end of the second century, Irenæus styles the Bishops of Rome 'presbyters.'¹

Unless we carefully keep in mind this indiscriminate use of the two words, we shall frequently misunderstand passages in writings of the first and second century. In many places where the appointment of bishops is spoken of, it is really presbyters of single churches that are intended.

But the argument derived from this circumstance must not be pressed too far. All that we can legitimately infer is that the word bishop had not at first that technical signification which it afterwards acquired. It by no means follows that a gradation or difference of ranks did not exist among presbyters or elders. S. Peter, addressing certain of them, says, 'The presbyters therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow presbyter.'² But though he so styles himself, he undoubtedly exercised authority over them. He was a presbyter, but he was also something more.

A decisive instance of the use of the word presbyter to designate those who to all intents and purposes were bishops occurs in a passage from Irenæus already briefly noticed. Writing to Soter, Bishop of Rome (circa A.D. 180), respecting the observance of Easter at a particular time of the year, he says: 'And those presbyters who governed the Church before Soter, and over which you now preside—I mean Anicetus and Pius, Hyginus, Telesphorus, and Xystus—neither did themselves observe nor did they permit those with them to observe it.'³

Here Irenæus mentions by name several bishops of Rome who undoubtedly exercised diocesan authority, and yet calls them 'presbyters.' It is obvious, therefore, that the mere use of this word is inconclusive. We must, in every case where it occurs in ancient Christian writers, look to the context and the circumstances to determine whether it designates bishops of dioceses or ministers of single churches.

The first instance of the appointment of a diocesan, or resident bishop, is that of S. James, Bishop of Jerusalem. While the other apostles travelled far and wide, teaching and

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. b. v. c. 24.*

² συμπρεσβύτερος, 1 Pet. v. 1.

³ Eusebius, *Hist. b. v. c. 24.*

preaching, he abode at Jerusalem, and superintended not only the church there, but all the other churches of Christendom. Hegesippus, a writer of the highest authority, who lived near the Apostolic times, says, 'James, the brother of the Lord, undertook the administration of the Church, together with the apostles;' ¹ and Clement of Alexandria says, 'Peter, and James, and John, after the ascension of our Saviour, though they had been preferred by our Lord, did not contend for the honour, but chose James the Just as Bishop of Jerusalem.'² This fact, like many others of great historical interest, is not expressly recorded in the New Testament, but it is plainly implied. S. Paul, referring to transactions at Antioch, says, 'But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they came he drew back and separated himself.'³ This passage shows clearly the position of S. James in the Church—that he possessed and exercised authority to send messengers to the disciples at Antioch, and to give directions to them on matters of discipline, even though the two apostles SS. Peter and Paul were present among them. It is clear also that the authority of S. James was recognised by S. Peter, for immediately on the arrival of these messengers he altered his conduct towards the Gentiles.

Again, in the Apostolic Council at Jerusalem, at which the question of circumcising converts was discussed, though SS. Peter and Paul and Barnabas took prominent parts in the debate, it is S. James who sums it up and gives the final decision. After all the rest had spoken he pronounces the result of the discussion, prefacing it with the words, 'Wherefore I adjudge.'⁴ The words are emphatic. The previous speakers argue, but S. James adjudges.

It appears that S. James remained at Jerusalem and superintended the affairs of the Church up to the time of his death. At a very critical point in the history of the Christian community, when the old dissensions between two parties respecting Jewish observances had broken out with fresh inten-

¹ Eusebius. *Hist.* b. ii. c. 23.

² *Ib.* b. ii. c. 21.

³ Galatians ii. 11.

⁴ διὸ ἐγὼ κρίνω, Acts xv. 19.

sity, he interposed to maintain peace. S. Paul, on his return from one of his missionary journeys, 'went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present,'¹ and was advised by the assembled council to avoid giving offence to those disciples who were 'zealous of the law,' and to show his conformity with Jewish customs by presenting himself at a rite of especial solemnity in the temple. And to this advice the apostle gave entire deference.

It cannot be doubted that S. James was a bishop in the strict sense of the word; that he presided over a council of the elders at Jerusalem; that he assumed control over distant churches; that even the other apostles submitted to his authority.

But then it may be argued that the circumstances of the Church of Jerusalem were exceptional,—that it was necessary during the very infancy of the Church that there should be some centre to which the apostles could return from their missionary tours, and that S. James was not so much a bishop presiding over a diocese as a metropolitan presiding over all Christendom.

All this is doubtless true, and therefore it remains to be seen whether there is any evidence of the existence of a strictly diocesan system in Apostolic times.

The germs at least of such a system are to be found in the Epistles of S. Paul to Timothy and to Titus. Both these companions of the apostle had joined him in various missionary journeys, and to both he had assigned important and arduous commissions. The occasion of the First Epistle to Timothy is thus stated by the apostle himself: 'As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going to Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine; neither to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, the which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith: *so I do now.*'²

S. Paul reminds Timothy that he had been left in charge

¹ Acts xxi. 18.

² 1 Tim. i. 3. In the original the sentence is incomplete. The words 'so do' or 'so I do now' are supplied in the Authorised and Revised Versions, and are evidently required by the context.

of the Ephesian Churches, and desires him to continue in that office. The apostle goes on to give directions as to the affairs of the Church, the form of prayers to be used, the behaviour of men and women in the congregation, the qualification of 'bishops' and deacons, and the discipline of the Church. Various admonitions are given as to the conduct to be observed towards presbyters. 'Against a presbyter receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses;' and again, 'Lay hands suddenly on no man.'¹ These passages show conclusively that Timothy was to exercise authority over the ministers of the Church. He had power to ordain them. He had power to hear and determine accusations against them.

Of much the same character is the Epistle to Titus. 'For this cause,' the apostle reminds him, 'I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order those things, and appoint elders in every city.' That is, the very object for which Titus was left in charge of the Cretan Churches was that he should exercise a general supervision over them, and select and appoint fit ministers. The resemblances between this epistle and the First Epistle to Timothy are very striking. They give almost the same advice respecting ministers and office-bearers, and show that the constitution of the Ephesian and Cretan Churches was identical.

In both epistles there is conclusive evidence of the existence of the episcopal office,—of an oversight exercised by the apostle's two delegates over several churches and congregations.

It has been contended that these arrangements were merely transitory,—that the authority given to Timothy and Titus was not intended to be permanent. But do the passages cited in support of this opinion confirm it?² It is submitted that of

¹ 1 Tim. v. 19, 22.

² Dr. Lightfoot, in his edition of *S. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, says with reference to Timothy and Titus: 'in both cases their term of office is drawing to a close when the apostle writes,' and cites in support of this statement the following five passages:—

1. Tim. i. 8: 'As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia . . . so do I now.'
1. Tim. iii. 14: 'These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee

these passages the first and second point to the directly opposite conclusion. In the first, S. Paul requires Timothy to remain at Ephesus and continue his work there. The second is much to the same effect. The hope of seeing Timothy shortly does not imply that he is to leave Ephesus. The third passage is taken from the *second* Epistle to Timothy, which was written in totally different circumstances from those in which the first was written. S. Paul, when he penned the second Epistle, had been taken a prisoner to Rome, and was in imminent peril. He bade the beloved companion to hasten to Rome, doubtless to aid him in his defence. This did not imply that Timothy was to desert his diocese. He seems to have complied with the request of the apostle, for the Epistle to the Hebrews, which was written in Italy, intimates that he had been imprisoned and subsequently released.¹ After that release it is at least probable that he returned to the diocese which had been committed to his care.

Similar observations apply to the passages cited from the Epistle to Titus. The first of them certainly does not indicate that he was shortly to leave Crete. On the contrary, it refers to a work which would necessarily detain him a long time in that island. The second passage, in which he is requested to meet S. Paul at Nicopolis, is quite consistent with an intention that he should return to Crete.

Besides this, the general tenor both of the First Epistle to Timothy and of that to Titus is far more suitable to the hypothesis of a permanent residence in their respective dioceses. They are directed to ordain ministers and to enrol widows,² to maintain order in the church and overlook the conduct of

shortly; but if I tarry, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God. . . .'

2 Tim. iv. 9: 'Do thy diligence to come unto me shortly.'

Tit. i. 5: 'For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city.'

Tit. iii. 12: 'Give diligence to come unto me to Nicopolis: for there I have determined to winter.'

¹ 'Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty' (Heb. xiii. 23).

² 'Let none be enrolled as a widow under threescore years' (1 Tim. v. 9).

all its members. These minute directions would require a long time for their fulfilment.

Eusebius speaks of the ministrations of Timothy at Ephesus and Titus in Crete in language which excludes the idea that their missions were temporary. After referring to the difficulty of ascertaining the names of all those who 'were judged suitable to feed the churches established by these apostles,' he adds, 'Timothy, indeed, is recorded as having first received the districts at Ephesus, as Titus also was appointed over the churches in Crete.'¹ This is not the language in which brief visits would be described.

The system of Church government described in these two epistles was eminently suited to its purpose. In reading the earliest Church history we must never lose sight of the fact that the disciples had no New Testament, and were almost entirely dependent on oral teaching. A quarter of a century elapsed after the apostles began their preaching before any one of the books of the New Testament was written. Consequently there was not previously any authoritative written guide as to matters of doctrine. Besides that, the presbyters were poor illiterate men, belonging for the most part to the lowest social rank. In these circumstances the only possible way of securing uniformity of teaching was by setting over them others to whom they could look up as disciples to their masters. In after ages, when the canon of the New Testament was substantially settled, a presbyterate without such a ruler might have been possible. In the Apostolic age it was simply impossible.

There is also direct evidence that long before the close of the first century bishops, in the sense of chief presbyters, presided over important dioceses. Eusebius has collected the names of many, and his accounts are so circumstantial that it would be absurd to suppose that they are without foundation. He states that after the martyrdom of S. James, the apostles and disciples met to appoint a successor to him, and that they

¹ *Hist. b. iii. c. 4.* The expression 'it is recorded' (*ιστορεῖται*) shows that Eusebius cites documents which are not now extant.

unanimously 'declared Simcon, the son of Clopas, of whom mention is made in the sacred volume, worthy of the episcopal seat there.'¹

There cannot be any reasonable doubt that Simeon was second Bishop of Jerusalem, and since we know from various places in the Acts of the Apostles that there was a numerous presbyterate there, he must have presided over that body. He was appointed immediately after the siege of Jerusalem, and therefore while many of the apostles were still living.

There is abundant evidence that many companions of the apostles were diocesan bishops. Polycarp was one of these. Irenæus speaks thus of him :—

Polycarp, a man who had been instructed by the apostles, and had familiar intercourse with many that had seen Christ, and had also been appointed by the apostles bishop in Asia, in the Church of Smyrna—whom we also have seen in our youth, for he lived a long time and to a very advanced age—after a glorious and most distinguished martyrdom, departed this life. He always taught what he had learned from the apostles, what the Church had handed down, and what is the only true doctrine. All the Churches bear witness to these things, and those that have succeeded Polycarp to the present time testify that he was a witness of the truth.²

Can it be credited for a moment that all this is pure invention? Irenæus, a learned and copious writer, who occupies a distinguished position in the annals of the Church, tells us, not as a matter of hearsay, but from personal knowledge of Polycarp, that he occupied the position of Bishop of the Church of Smyrna. Further, he tells us that Polycarp had been appointed to that office by the apostles. He (Irenæus) could derive that information only from his master. But is it to be believed that Polycarp, who ultimately laid down his life in the cause of Christianity, would have deliberately misrepresented a matter of such moment?

In what sense Polycarp was a bishop appears sufficiently

¹ Eusebius, *Hist.* b. iii. c. 11. It is clear from the context that Eusebius here quotes the earlier writer Hegesippus.

² Eusebius, *Hist.* b. iv. c. 14.

from his writings and those of his contemporary Ignatius, who also suffered martyrdom.

The Encyclical Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians—a document of which the authenticity is not disputed—commences thus :—

Polycarp and the presbyters who are with him, to the Church of God sojourning at Philippi: mercy to you and peace from God Almighty and from the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour be multiplied.¹

The phrase 'Polycarp and the presbyters who are with him' can have but one meaning, namely, that Polycarp presided over the presbyterate at Smyrna. But the evidence does not stop here. Ignatius, in his undoubted letter to the church of this very city, Smyrna, says :—

I salute your most worthy Bishop Polycarp, and your venerable presbytery and your Christ-bearing deacons, my fellow servants, and all of you, individually as well as generally, in the name of Christ Jesus.²

Unless, then, we are prepared to suppose that the martyrs Polycarp and Ignatius and the illustrious Irenæus all misstate a matter which, to many of those whom they addressed, was a matter of notoriety, we must acknowledge that Polycarp, the friend and disciple of the apostles, was, with their sanction, bishop of Smyrna, and that the ministry of that Church consisted of three distinct orders—bishop, priests, and deacons. A mind capable of resisting this conclusion must be capable of resisting all historical evidence whatsoever.

The letters of Ignatius teem with references to the three distinct orders of bishops, priests, and deacons. Writing to the Church of Ephesus, he prays that, 'being subject to the bishop and presbytery, ye may in all things be sanctified.' He adds that their 'renowned presbytery, worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to the bishop as the strings are to the harp.' He prays them to 'be careful to be subject to the bishop and the presbyters and deacons,' and exhorts them to come to-

¹ *The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians.*

² *Ignatius to the Smyrniacans*, c. 12. *Ignatius to Polycarp*, c. 6. These passages are substantially the same in the longer and the shorter Greek form.

gether 'in obedience to the bishop and the presbytery with an undivided mind, breaking one and the same bread, which is the medicine of immortality.'¹

To the Church of Magnesia near the Meander he uses just the same language. He refers to the privilege he had enjoyed of seeing them 'through Damas, your most worthy bishop, and through your worthy presbyters Bassus and Apollonius, and through my fellow-servant the deacon Sotio, whose friendship may I ever enjoy, inasmuch as he, by the grace of God, is subject to the bishop and presbytery in the law of Jesus Christ.' He bids them not to do anything 'without the bishop and presbyters,' and speaks of 'your most admirable bishop and the well-compacted spiritual crown of your presbyters and the deacons who are according to God.'² This epistle is the more remarkable, because it was evidently written during his sojourn at Smyrna with Polycarp; for he sends to the Magnesians the salutations of Polycarp, and Polycarp in his own epistle thus describes those of Ignatius:—

The epistles of Ignatius, written by him to us, and all the rest of his epistles which we have by us, we have sent to you as you requested. They are subjoined to this epistle, and by them ye may be greatly profited, for they treat of faith and patience and of all things that tend to edification in our Lord.³

It appears, therefore, that the epistles of Ignatius were seen by Polycarp and approved of by him. Consequently, he confirms the principles of Church government which pervade these writings of Ignatius.

The evidence derived from these documents is so abundant that it would occupy too much space to cite the whole. The following extract from his Epistle to the Church of Tralles in Asia shows, with remarkable clearness, the relation in which the three orders in the Church stood with respect to each other:—

What is the bishop but one who beyond all others possesses

¹ *Ignatius to the Ephesians*, cc. 2, 4, 5, 20.

² *Ignatius to the Magnesians*, cc. 2, 7.

³ *The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians*, c. 13.

all power and authority, so far as it is possible for a man to possess it, who, according to his ability, has been made an imitator of the Christ of God? And what is the presbytery but a sacred assembly—the counsellors and assessors of the bishop? And what are the deacons but imitators of the angelic powers, fulfilling a pure and blameless ministry unto him as the holy Stephen did to the blessed James, Timothy and Linus unto Paul, Anencletus and Clement to Peter? ¹

Much more might be quoted to the same effect. To the Philippians he writes :—

Take ye heed, then, to have but one Eucharist : for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one cup of the unity of his blood, one altar, as there is one bishop, along with the presbyters and deacons my fellow servants.

The epistles of Ignatius are extant in three forms—a longer Greek recension, a shorter Greek recension, and a Syriac version. Many eminent scholars believe that the shorter Greek form represents the genuine letters.² Others again assume that the Syriac version represents the epistles in their original form,³ but that the short Greek recension is not later than the middle of the second century, and therefore holds a most important place among early Christian documents. Here the extracts have been taken almost entirely from the short Greek form ; and as we are concerned only with the historical evidence of these documents, they sufficiently prove that before the middle of the second century the three orders of ministers were established in Christian Churches. But even if we confine our attention to the Syriac version, and discard all the rest, the argument remains unaffected. The following is from the Syriac version. Addressing Polycarp, and through him the Church of Smyrna, of which he was bishop, Ignatius writes :—

Look ye to the bishop, that God also may look upon you.
I will be instead of the souls of those who are subject to the

¹ *Ignatius to the Trallians*, c. 7.

² *Ante-Nicene Library*, vol. i. p. 140.

³ Dr Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 232, third edition.

bishop and the presbyters and the deacons. With them may I have a portion in the presence of God.¹

Is it possible that Ignatius, bishop and martyr, could have thus written to Polycarp—the companion of the apostles—and spoken of bishops, priests, and deacons as known officers of the Church, if those offices did not exist?

To the same effect Irenæus² (about A.D. 180) writes:—
‘Wherefore it is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles, those who together with the succession of the episcopate have received the certain gift of truth.’

But then it may be urged that though those offices existed when Ignatius and Irenæus wrote, it does not follow that they existed in the time of the apostles. The answer is plain. Ignatius succeeded Evodius as Bishop of Antioch before the close of the first century,³ while some of the apostles were still living. At the same time Polycarp was Bishop of Smyrna and Clement Bishop of Rome in the strict sense of the word bishop. Eusebius gives the names of several other bishops about the same time.⁴

It matters little whether we style these officers of the Church bishops or chief presbyters. The important point is not the name of the office, but its actual nature. How was a bishop elected? What functions and duties appertained to him as distinguished from other presbyters?

Bishops were either nominated directly by apostles, as Timothy and Titus were, or were elected by councils.

There is a clear instance⁵ given in the Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp of the election of a bishop by a council of the Church. Polycarp and Ignatius were both contemporaries of the apostles, and intimately acquainted with their teaching and practice.

¹ *Ignatius to Polycarp*, c. 6.

² Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, b. iv. c. ii.

³ Eusebius, *Hist.* b. iii. c. 22.

⁴ For example, Cerdon, third Bishop of Alexandria, and Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis.—Eusebius, *Hist.* b. iii. cc. 21, 36.

⁵ This instance does not appear to have been hitherto noticed by writers of Church history.

On his way to martyrdom at Rome Ignatius, who had been Bishop at Antioch, writes thus to Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna:—

Seeing that the church which is at Antioch in Syria is, as report has informed me, at peace through your prayers, I also am the more encouraged resting, without anxiety, in God, if indeed by means of suffering I may attain to God, so that through your prayers I may be found a disciple of Christ. It is fitting, O Polycarp, most blessed in God, to assemble a godly council, and to elect one whom you greatly love and know to be a man of activity, who may be designated the messenger of God, and to bestow on him the honour, and glorify your ever active love to the praise of Christ.

And a little further on he adds: 'I salute him who shall be deemed worthy to go into Syria. Grace shall be with him for ever and with Polycarp, who sends him.'¹ That Ignatius here refers to his successor in the episcopate is clear from the Syriac version of the same passage, which is this: 'I salute him who is reckoned worthy to go to Antioch in my stead, as I commanded thee.'

Eusebius states that the successor thus chosen bore the name of Heros.²

It seems somewhat remarkable at first sight that a bishop of Antioch should be sent from Smyrna. Antioch was the more important place; and these two cities were several hundreds of miles apart. Two reasons may be suggested for the election of the bishop by the church of the less important city. In the first place, Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, was the most illustrious and eminent Bishop of the Eastern Church, and had been the chosen companion of the apostles. Secondly, the Church at Antioch had been almost overwhelmed by persecution. The constitution of the Church was but recently restored,³ and it seemed necessary to resort to a foreign church for a bishop to supply the place of Ignatius about to become a martyr.

¹ *Ignatius to Polycarp*, cc. 7 and 8.

² *History*, b. iii. c. 36.

³ Ignatius writes to the Church of Smyrna, bidding them to congratulate the Church of Antioch 'that they are now at peace and restored to their proper greatness and proper constitution.'—*To the Smyrnaeans*, c. 11.

In the time of Polycarp the Church of Smyrna appears to have been of the

It has been deemed worth while to notice at some length this election of a successor of Irenæus, for our information respecting the mode in which bishops were appointed in that age are extremely scanty. But that they were appointed by the suffrages of the churches is beyond doubt. Eusebius, speaking of the election of a Bishop of Rome named Fabianus, says that 'all the brethren had assembled in the church for the purpose of ordaining him who should succeed in the episcopate.'¹ It is true that the historian is here referring to events of the third century; but it is clear that he describes an established practice derived from the first age of the Church.

The evidence of the 'Apostolical Constitutions' is to the same effect. That remarkable book is so marred by interpolations, that it must always be cited with extreme caution. There are, however, passages in it which appear to represent faithfully and accurately the most ancient practice of the Church. The following very interesting passage, though probably written after the Apostolic age, seems to be of this nature; for the mode of ordination is described as a settled usage, and it agrees with the earlier authorities on the subject.²

A bishop to be ordained is to be chosen by the whole people, and when he is named and approved let the people assemble with the presbytery and bishops on the Lord's-day. And let the principal of the bishops ask the presbytery and people whether this be the person they desire for their ruler. And if they give their consent, let him ask further whether he has a good testimony from all men of his worthiness for so great and

nature of a metropolitan church. In the next chapter an instance will be given in which it was consulted by the Church of Philippi.

¹ *Eccles. Hist.* b. vi. c. 29.

² It is right to say that this passage is prefaced with a statement that this constitution was made in the presence of the apostles, 'the rest of the presbyters and the seven deacons,' and then follow the words, 'In the first place, therefore, I, Peter, say.' These words are obviously a clumsy and absurd interpolation. But a document, if otherwise trustworthy, ought not to be summarily rejected on account of spurious additions. In this case the additions may be detected by comparing the Greek text and the Coptic version ('Apostolical Constitutions,' *Ante-Nicene Library*, p. 213). Here those portions only are given which appear in both versions, and the few sentences which appear in the Greek and not in the Coptic are rejected as spurious.

glorious an authority: whether all things relating to his piety towards God be right; whether justice towards men has been observed by him; whether the affairs of his family have been well ordered by him; whether he has been unblameable in the course of his life. And if all the assembly together do, according to truth, and not according to prejudice, witness that he is such a one, let them the third time, as before God the judge and Christ, ask again whether he be truly worthy of the ministry, that so in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if they agree the third time that he is worthy, let them all be demanded their vote, and when they all give it willingly, silence being made, let one of the principal bishops, together with others, stand near to the altar, the rest of the bishops and presbyters praying silently, and the deacons holding the divine gospels open upon the head of him that is ordained.¹

We next proceed to consider some of the functions of the bishop thus elected.

I. In the first place, it is apparent from the numerous passages from the Epistles of Ignatius, already quoted, that the presbyters and bishop constituted a deliberative assembly, but that the supreme authority was vested in the bishop, who had a power of veto. This is implied in such phrases as these, 'Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop,'² and, 'Look ye to the bishop that God also may look upon you.'³

II. In the second place, the bishop had a disciplinary power. 'Rebuke not an elder,' says S. Paul to Timothy, 'but exhort him as a father; the younger men as brethren, the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters.' The form of judicial procedure is defined. An accusation against a presbyter must be supported by the evidence of several wit-

¹ *Apostolical Constitutions*, b viii. c. 4. s. 2. The original word χειροτονου-
μενου may mean either 'ordained by imposition of hands' or 'elected by show
of hands.' To the same effect Cyprian (*Epist.* 67, s. 5), where he says this
practice is 'delivered from divine tradition and apostolic observance, which is
also maintained by us and almost throughout all the provinces.'

² *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, viii.

³ *Epistle to Polycarp*, vi. The passage is substantially the same in the
Greek and the Syriac.

nesses, and the sentence or censure if pronounced must be pronounced openly. 'Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses. Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest may be in fear,' and then follows a solemn adjuration to 'observe these things without preference, doing nothing by partiality.'¹

Sentence of excommunication was pronounced by the bishop not sitting alone, but in a solemn assembly. Of this practice a remarkable instance is mentioned in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. S. Paul had received information that some member of the Church at Corinth had committed incest, and thereupon he directs that an assembly should be convened, and that the offender should be delivered over to Satan, which means that he was to be excommunicated.² In a similar way S. Paul informs Timothy that he had excommunicated Hymenæus and Alexander on account of their heretical doctrines.³ In like manner the apostle writes to Titus: 'A heretical man after a first and second warning reject, knowing that such a one hath been turned away, and sinneth, being self-condemned.'⁴

Tertullian states that the tribunals of the Church were held in places of meeting for worship. 'In the same place we deliver exhortations, reproofs, and the religious censure of excommunication. For our judgments are given with great solemnity, as among men who are conscious that they are in the sight of God; and it is the surest anticipation of future judgment if any one who offends is therefore banished from all communion, and from our public assemblies and all holy intercourse.'⁵ Tertullian wrote in the second century, but he describes a procedure sanctioned by the Church of the Apostolic era.

¹ 1 Tim. v. 21.

² 1 Cor. v. 4. In the *Life of S. Paul*, by Conybeare and Howson, chap. xv. the passage is thus paraphrased: 'I have already passed sentence, as though present, on him who has done this thing, [and I decree] in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you convene an assembly and, when you, and my spirit with you, are gathered together with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you deliver over to Satan the man who has thus sinned.'

³ 1 Tim. i. 20.

⁴ *Apology*, c. 39.

⁵ Tit. iii. 10, 11.

III. In the third place, the bishop, as a man of superior learning, was a chief guide as to matters of doctrine. Here, again, we must revert to the fact that the earliest Christians had not a New Testament, and were dependent on oral teaching. When any controversy arose on any question of faith and practice, it could not be tested by appeal to written documents. The only possible resort was to the ministers of the Church.

Thus Irenæus argues that while heresies are various and inconsistent, the doctrine of the Church is uniform, because it depends on the sure tradition from the apostles committed to the bishops.¹

There is a striking passage in the writings of Clement of Alexandria which illustrates the difficulty of maintaining uniformity of faith in his time—the close of the second century. Referring to his books called ‘Stromata,’ he says: ‘They are treasured up by me as a kind of commentaries for my old age, and an antidote to forgetfulness as a natural image and sketch of those efficacious doctrines which I was honoured to receive from those blessed and truly excellent men.’ And after mentioning several of his instructors by name, he adds: ‘These indeed preserved the true tradition of salutary doctrine, which, as given by Peter and James, John and Paul, had descended from father to son.’²

Papias, a much earlier writer, who had been intimate with many of the companions of the apostles, says: ‘If I met with any one who had been a follower of the elders anywhere, I made it a point to inquire what were the declarations of the elders; what was said by Andrew, Peter, or Philip; what by Thomas, James, John, Matthew, or any other disciples of the Lord; what was said by Aristion and the presbyter John, disciples of the Lord. For I do not think I derived so much

¹ Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, b. v. c. 20, s. 1. In another place Irenæus refers ‘to that tradition which originates from the apostles, which is preserved by means of the succession of presbyters’ (b. iii. c. 2, s. 1); and a little further on he adds: ‘It is within the power of all in every church to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the whole world’ (b. iii. c. 3, s. 1).

² Eusebius, *History*, b. v. c. 11.

benefit from books, as from the living voice of those who are still surviving.'¹

These passages from ancient writers serve to illustrate and explain the numerous references in S. Paul's Epistles to oral or traditional teaching. To the Thessalonians he writes: 'So then, brethren, stand fast and hold the doctrines which ye were taught, whether by word or by epistles of ours.'² The Thessalonians are admonished to maintain not only the doctrines recorded in writing, but also those taught by word of mouth.

To Timothy the apostle writes: 'The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou unto faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.'³ The evident meaning of the passage is that the same oral instruction which Timothy had received he was to communicate to his presbyters, so that they in their turn might teach the people.

IV. In the fourth place the bishop had the principal part in ordaining other ministers of the Church. For the reasons already given the selection of fit ministers was of vital importance to the primitive Church, mainly dependent (as it was) on oral instruction—not only as to matters of doctrine, but also as to the mode of conducting religious services.

PRESBYTERS.

The mode of appointing presbyters in the Apostolic age is indicated in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. To Timothy S. Paul writes: 'Lay hands suddenly on no man, nor share

¹ Eusebius, *Hist.* b. iii. c. 39.

² 2 Thess. ii. 15.

³ 2 Tim. ii. 2. Tertullian regards this successive ordination commencing with the apostles as the true test of orthodoxy. Arguing with the heretic Marcion he exclaims: 'Show us one of your churches tracing its descent from an apostle, and you have gained the day.'—*Adv. Marcion*, b. i. c. 21. In another place Tertullian, referring to heretical churches, says: 'Let them produce the original records of their churches; let them unfold the roll of their bishops, running down in due succession from the beginning, so that their first bishop shall be able to show for his predecessor and ordainer some one of the apostles or of apostolic men.'—*Præscript*, c. 32.

in the guilt of others,'¹ that is, do not participate in the guilt of appointing unfit persons. Apparently the apostle refers to cases in which this had occurred. Writing to Titus, he says: 'For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint presbyters in every city, as I gave thee charge.'² And then follow very precise and minute instructions as to the sort of persons to be selected.

Much sophistry has been exercised in modern times to elude the effect of these words. But they are very plain. S. Paul distinctly assigned to his two faithful companions the task of selecting proper ministers for the churches in Crete and Ephesus. He addresses them personally, and bids them exercise the utmost care in their selection. In every instance in which the mode of appointing elders is mentioned in the New Testament, it is shown that they were appointed by the apostles, or by authority delegated by the apostles. There is not one passage from which it can be inferred that any other kind of appointment of presbyters existed in Apostolic times.

Early Christian writers are unanimous to the same effect. Clement of Rome, the contemporary of the apostles, has a memorable passage respecting the method of Church government adopted by them. The main object of his epistle is to rebuke certain unruly members of the Corinthian Church who had ejected presbyters from their office. After citing as an example the institution of the Jewish priesthood by Moses, Clement proceeds thus:—

The apostles have preached the Gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ from God. Christ, therefore, was sent forth by God and the apostles by Christ. Both things were done in an appointed order. Having, therefore, received a charge, and being fully assured through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and confirmed in the Word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand. And thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the

¹ *χεῖρας ταχέως μηδενὶ ἐπιτίθει, μηδὲ κοινάγει ἁμαρτίας ἀλλοτρίαις*, 1 Tim. v. 22.

² Titus i. 5.

first-fruits [of their labours] when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons unto them that should believe.¹

S. Clement, be it observed, is not here repeating a tradition, but states a fact which came under his own personal observation. He knew at least two of the apostles, SS. Peter and Paul intimately; had laboured with them in preaching; was Bishop of the Romans, and was so highly esteemed that for a long time it was customary to read this very epistle publicly in congregations. Higher evidence it is impossible to have, and his statement is explicit that it was the apostles themselves who appointed their earliest converts to be 'bishops' or presbyters of various congregations.

There are other passages in this venerable document to the same effect. The following are among the most remarkable:—

- And our apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife on account of the title of the bishop's office. For this cause, therefore, inasmuch as they had obtained a perfect foreknowledge, they appointed the aforesaid persons, and afterwards gave directions that when they should fall asleep other approved men should succeed to their ministration. We are of opinion therefore that those appointed by them or afterwards by other men of repute with the consent of the whole church, and who have blamelessly served the flock of Christ in a humble, peaceable, and modest manner, and have for a long time possessed the esteem of all, cannot be justly dismissed from the ministry: for our sin will not be small if we thrust out from the bishop's office those who have blamelessly and holily presented offerings.

The word 'bishop' here is evidently equivalent to 'presbyter.' There is some diversity of opinion² as to the meaning of the expression 'when they should fall asleep,' whether it refers to the apostles or to the ministers appointed by them. But whichever way this expression is interpreted the general tenor of the passage is free from doubt. S. Clement declares that the apostles in the first instance appointed presbyters, and made an arrangement for a succession of ministers

¹ *S. Clement to the Corinthians*, c. 42.

² Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 203.

to be appointed by men of repute with the approval of the church.

A century later Irenæus refers to this uninterrupted succession in the ministry of the church. He says: 'We are in a position to reckon up those who were by the apostles instituted bishops in the churches, and to show the successions of these men to our own times.' He adds, with reference to those who were appointed by apostles: 'They were desirous that these men should be very perfect and blameless in all things, whom also they were leaving behind as their successors, delivering up their place of government to these men; which men, if they discharged their functions honestly, would be a great boon; but if they should fall away, the direst calamity.'¹

We have, then, ample proof that, in the earliest ages of the Church, the chief responsibility for the selection of ministers rested with the bishop or chief presbyter; and we have equally strong proof that he did not act on his sole authority, but consulted the rest of the presbytery. The ordination of ministers by laying on of hands took place in the presence of the presbyters. Even the apostles did not claim the right of ordaining without the assent of the presbytery. S. Paul thus exhorts Timothy: 'Neglect not the grace that is in thee, that was given to thee by public announcement with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.'² In another place, the ordination of Timothy is somewhat differently described. He is exhorted by the apostle to stir up, or kindle,³ 'the grace of God that is in thee by the laying on of my hands.'

Putting these two passages together, we find that Timothy was ordained publicly before the congregation, and that

¹ Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, b. iii. c. 3, s. 1.

² *μη ἀμέλει τοῦ ἐν σοὶ χαρίσματος, ὃ ἐδόθη σοὶ διὰ προφητείας μετὰ ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου*, 1 Tim. iv. 14. To translate *προφητείας* by the word 'prophecy' makes nonsense of the passage. What possible connection could there be between prophecy in the sense of foretelling, and the ceremony of ordination? Archbishop Trench, in his *Synonyms of the New Testament*, well observes (§ vi.): 'Of the *προφήτης* alike of the Old Testament and of the New we may with some confidence say that he is not primarily, but only accidentally one who foretells things future; being rather one who, having been taught of God, speaks out His will.'

³ *ἀναζωπυρεῖν*, 2 Tim. i. 6.

S. Paul and the elders together performed the ceremony of laying on of hands.

This ceremony is repeatedly mentioned in the New Testament. It was an indispensable part of the rite of ordination, and we shall search in vain for an instance of appointment to any ministry in the Church without it.

The custom of laying on of hands was undoubtedly derived from the Mosaic law. Thus, with regard to the consecration of the Levites: 'Thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord, and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites.'¹ In the appointment of Joshua to succeed Moses we are told that 'he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation, and he laid his hands upon him.'²

The references in the New Testament to this ancient rite are frequent. When seven disciples were chosen to minister to the wants of the poor, the brethren chose the seven, 'whom they set before the apostles, and when they had prayed they laid their hands upon them.'³ SS. Paul and Barnabas, before they commenced their mission to the Gentiles, were ordained in the same way at Antioch. 'When they had fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.'⁴ S. Paul had previously preached in the synagogues as a layman; this the rule of the Church permitted, but he never was called an apostle or acted as a minister of the Church until after he had been ordained.

Having regard to the essential importance of choosing fit men for the ministry, a more satisfactory and natural mode of selection than that adopted by the primitive Church cannot be imagined. The chief responsibility rested with the bishop, but the concurrence of the presbytery was requisite, and, as a further safeguard, the ordination took place in the presence of the congregation.

¹ Numbers viii. 10.

² Numbers xxvii. 22.

³ Acts vi. 6.

⁴ Acts xiii. 3. In ordaining deacons of the Church of England the bishop alone lays his hands upon them; but in the ordination of priests the rubric directs that 'the bishop with the priests present shall lay their hands severally upon the head of every one that receiveth the order of priesthood.'

Of the presbyter thus chosen the chief duties were preaching, the conduct of public worship, and the administration of the sacraments.

The duty of preaching was performed principally, but not exclusively, by presbyters. There is a curious passage in Eusebius which shows that preaching by laymen was permissible, but exceptional. He says that when the illustrious and learned Christian writer Origen early in the third century visited Palestine, he was requested by the bishops to expound the sacred Scriptures publicly in the church, although he had not obtained the priesthood by the imposition of hands. Thereupon Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, who had quarrelled with Origen, made a formal complaint in a letter to the bishops of Palestine, in which he stated 'that this was never before either heard or done, that laymen should deliver discourses in the presence of bishops.' One of these bishops, however, contradicted this statement as follows: 'I know not how it happens that he is here evidently so far from the truth. For indeed wheresoever there are found those qualified to benefit the brethren, these are exhorted by the holy bishops to address the people. Thus at Laranda, Euelpis was exhorted by Neon, and at Sconium, Paulinus by Celsus, and at Synnada, Theodore by Atticus, our blessed brethren. It is also probable that this has happened in other places, but we know not that it has.'¹

But though the preaching of laymen was occasionally allowed, it is quite clear that the presbyters constituted a very distinct class in the primitive Church, and that functions belonged to them which could not be discharged by the laity. The idea that all Christians of the Apostolic age were of equal rank is an invention of later times, and is directly contradicted by numerous passages in the New Testament. 'Obey them that rule over you,' says the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.'² 'Obey!' 'submit!' These are unwelcome words for those who contend for equality among all the members of a church, but the words cannot be

¹ Eusebius, *Hist.* b. vi. c. 19.

² Heb. xiii. 17.

expunged from the New Testament, nor their force evaded. S. Paul exhorts the elders of the Church of Ephesus thus: 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God.'¹ And S. Peter, using the same figure, bids his fellow elders 'feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof.'² The presbyters are the shepherds; the laity are the sheep, who must consent to be guided. There is not much support here for the doctrine that all members of the Church are on the same level.

And the chosen and honoured companion of these two apostles—S. Clement of Rome—writes to precisely the same effect. Rebuking some seditious and unruly members of the Church of Corinth, he writes thus:—

Mark ye who they are that have perverted you and diminished the glory of your renowned love for the brotherhood. It is shameful, dearly beloved, yes, utterly shameful and unworthy of your conduct in Christ, that it should be reported that the very steadfast and ancient Church of the Corinthians, for the sake of one or two persons, maketh sedition against its presbyters. And this report hath reached not only us, but them also which differ from us, so that ye even heap blasphemies on the name of the Lord by reason of your folly, and moreover create peril for yourselves.³

The presbyters then constituted, in a very marked and special manner, a distinct order in the Church. They were admonished, indeed, that they were not 'lords over God's heritage,'⁴ and it was because they attempted, after the simple order of the first century had been corrupted by later innovations, to become lords over God's heritage, that a natural reaction ensued; and men, revolting from the idea that presbyters were monarchs in the Church, went to the opposite extreme, and declared that the ideal of Church government was an absolute democracy.

We are here dealing only with the historical aspects of these questions; and the history of the first century establishes beyond all reasonable doubt that, while the laity had a

¹ Acts xx. 28.

² 1 Pet. v. 2.

³ *S. Clement to the Corinthians*, c. 47.

⁴ 1 Pet. v. 3.

voice—and a potent voice—in administering the secular affairs of the Church, the presbyters had a distinct office, into which the laity could not intrude without becoming schismatics.

To the presbyters alone belonged the power of performing the highest act of Christian worship—the celebration of the Eucharist. In the New Testament there is not a hint or suggestion of any one but an ordained presbyter breaking the bread, and we shall search in vain through the writings of the early Fathers to find any toleration of such a practice. If the references to the consecration of the Eucharist are few, it is because the rule on this subject was so thoroughly understood that there was but little need to mention it.

In a passage already quoted S. Clement says, 'Our sin will not be small if we eject from the episcopate those who have holily and blamelessly presented the offerings.'¹ The context shows clearly that the 'episcopate' here means the office of presbyters, and the 'offerings' are the oblations of the Eucharist. S. Clement then evidently regards the presbyters as the proper persons to celebrate that rite.

It was the doctrine of the primitive Church that the oblations of the Eucharist were strictly analogous to the offerings in the temple under the Mosaic law.² S. Clement throughout his epistle repeatedly insists on this analogy.

Unto the high priest his proper services have been assigned, and to the priests their proper office is appointed, and upon the Levites their proper ministrations are laid. The layman is bound by the rules which pertain to laymen.

Let each one of you join in the Eucharist³ to God in his

¹ *Epistle to the Corinthians*, c. 44.

² This is very explicitly stated by Irenæus, *Heresies*, b. iv. cc. 17 and 18.

³ It is right to observe that the eminent theologian, Bishop Lightfoot, instead of 'join in the Eucharist' has 'give thanks' in his translation of this passage. But the word *εὐχαριστεῖν*, it is submitted, here relates to the Eucharistic offerings; for S. Clement, in treating of public worship, of which the Eucharist was the principal part, immediately afterwards refers to the temple offerings as an analogous instance. The word *εὐχαριστία* had acquired the sacramental sense in S. Clement's time. In S. Paul's account of the first institution of the Lord's Supper, the word translated 'when He had given thanks' is *εὐχαριστήσας*.

own order, maintaining a good conscience, and not transgressing the appointed rule of his service,¹ but with all seemliness. Not in every place, brethren, are the daily sacrifices offered, or the free-will offerings, or the sin offerings, or the trespass offerings, but in Jerusalem only. And even there the offering is not made in every place, but before the sanctuary in the court of the altar; and this, too, through the high-priest and the ministers already mentioned.²

The general tenor of S. Clement's argument is this—that as in the Jewish Church the offerings are made in a strictly prescribed manner by the regular appointed ministers, so in the Christian Church there should be the same regard to order. Even if we concede that he does not expressly refer to the Eucharist, the argument remains unaffected. He insists that all the services should be performed by the proper ministers, and he points to the strict Jewish ritual as a proof of the necessity for liturgical order and regularity. But the Eucharist was the highest service of all, and therefore it would be absolutely destructive of S. Clement's argument to suppose that he would tolerate the consecration of the elements by laymen.

The truth is that such an act would have been regarded by the earliest churches as horrible profanation. S. Ignatius, writing a few years later than S. Clement, says, 'Let no man do anything connected with the church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a valid Eucharist which is administered by the bishop or one to whom he has entrusted it.'³ The bishop may give others power to celebrate, but it would be absurd to suppose that Ignatius thinks the power might be given to laymen. The whole tenor of his epistles, and the strong opinions which he entertains respecting the office of presbyters, forbid such an inference from his words.

Irenæus, to cite a somewhat later authority, says, with reference to the institution of the Lord's Supper, that Christ 'taught the new oblation of the new covenant, which the Church, receiving from the apostles, offers to God throughout the whole world.'⁴ The Eucharist is, according to this writer,

¹ μή παραβαίνων τὸν ὁρισμένον τῆς λειτουργίας αὐτοῦ κανόνα.

² *Epistle to Corinthians*, cc. 40, 41.

³ *To the Smyrniæans*, c. 8.

⁴ *Adv. Hæres.* b. iv. c. 17. s. 5.

the offering of the Church, and when we connect this passage with what he says in other places respecting the unity of the Church and the evil of schism, it is quite plain that the offering of the Church which he contemplates is that which is made by regularly appointed ministers. 'The true knowledge,' he says, 'is the doctrine of the apostles and the ancient constitution of the Church throughout all the world, and the manifestation of the body of Christ according to the succession of bishops.' Language such as this is utterly inconsistent with an idea that laymen might perform the most solemn of all Christian rites.

Justin Martyr, in his celebrated description¹ of the Eucharist, states that it is consecrated by the presiding minister. Tertullian² says that it is not received from the hands of any but the presiding ministers.

DEACONS.

The earliest notices of the constitution of the Church show that there was from the beginning an order of ministers subordinate to the presbyters. Of this order the first trace is found in the narrative of the death of Ananias and Sapphira.

And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it. And the young men arose and wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him. . . .

And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband.³

The words⁴ here translated 'young men' refer not so much to their age as to their office. They were attendants on the presbyters and subordinate to them. Thus S. Peter, after various exhortations to presbyters, adds, 'Likewise, ye younger, be subject to the presbyters,'⁵ where it is quite clear

¹ *First Apology*, cc. 65, 67.

² *De Corona*. 'Nec de aliorum manu quam præsidentium sumimus.' It is curious to observe that both writers call this minister the President. Προεστώς in Justin is exactly equivalent to *præsident* in Tertullian.

³ Acts v. 5, 10.

⁴ νεώτεροι in verse 6, and νεανίσκοι in verse 10.

⁵ δμώως, νεώτεροι, ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέροις, 1 Pet. v. 5.

from the context that he is treating of Church discipline, and the original word for 'younger men' is precisely the same as that used in the Acts with reference to the death of Ananias.

The 'Seven' who shortly afterwards were chosen by the Church with the sanction of the apostles to 'serve tables,' are very commonly described as deacons,¹ but their office was of a temporary nature; and though they discharged one of the offices of deacons, that of distributing alms, there were others of those offices which they do not appear to have discharged.

The chief duty of the deacon was to assist the bishops and presbyters in public worship, and they had the care of the ornaments and utensils. Their position with respect to the Christian presbyters was analogous to that of the Levites to the Jewish priests. In the administration of the Eucharist, after the elements had been consecrated by the priest, the deacons distributed them among the laity. Thus Justin Martyr says²:—

When the President has given thanks and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water, over which the thanksgiving was pronounced.

And the martyr Ignatius, who was a disciple of the Apostle John, describes the deacons as ministers of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, adding, 'they are not ministers of meat and drink, but servants of the Church of God.'³

The most ancient liturgies and the 'Apostolical Constitutions' refer to other offices of deacons connected with the

¹ 'Thus Eusebius gives the name of deacons to these Seven (*Eccles. Hist.* b. ii. c. 1), and in accordance with this view the number of deacons in many Greek and Roman churches was anciently seven. Thus the council of Neocæsarea (A.D. 314) decreed that there should be 'seven deacons and no more in every city, however large,' and the Church of Rome has never had more than seven deacons.'—Pelliccia, *Polity of the Church*, c. 1.

² *First Apology*, s. 65. 'A deacon does not bless, does not give the blessing, but receives it from the bishop and presbyter. He does not baptise, he does not offer. But when a bishop or presbyter has offered, he distributes to the people, not as a priest, but as one who ministers to the priests.'—*Apostolical Constitutions*, b. viii. c. 28.

³ *Ignatius ad Trall.* c. 2.

regulation of public worship, such as directions to the laity to stand up at particular parts of the service, and to catechumens to withdraw before the consecration of the Eucharist. Deacons maintained order in the church, and directed the different members of the congregation to their places.¹ These officers also had the important duty of visiting the poor, and of representing to the 'bishop' proper cases for charitable relief.²

It is a moot question whether deacons were originally permitted to baptise. Tertullian³ says that they might do so with the leave of the bishop. On the other hand, the 'Apostolical Constitutions' seem to deny to them this power. 'We do not permit to the rest of the clergy to baptise—as, for instance, neither to the readers, nor singers, nor porters, nor ministers, but to the bishops and presbyters alone, yet so that the deacons are to minister to them therein.'⁴ Probably it would be correct to say that in the earliest times of the Church it was not the practice for laymen or deacons to baptise except in cases of great emergency. Thus, when Philip, one of the Seven, preached to the eunuch, minister of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians—'as they went on their way they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptised? And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptised him.'⁵

¹ 'Let the deacon be the disposer of the places, that every one of those that comes in may go to his proper place and not sit at the entrance. In like manner, let the deacon oversee the people, that nobody may whisper or slumber or nod. For all ought in the church to stand wisely and soberly and attentively, having their attention fixed on the Word of God. After this, let all rise up with one consent and, looking towards the east, after the catechumens and penitents are gone out, pray to God eastward. . . . As to the deacons, after the prayer is over, let some of them attend upon the oblation of the Eucharist, ministering to the Lord's body with fear.'—*Apostolical Constitutions*, b. ii. c. 57.

² *Apostolical Constitutions*, b. ii. c. 32.

³ Tertullian, *De Bapt.* c. 17.

⁴ *Apost. Const.* b. iii. c. 11.

⁵ Acts viii. 36. A similar instance is the baptism of S. Paul by Ananias, who is styled a disciple or learner (*μαθητής*, Acts ix. 10), and who evidently was not a presbyter.

S. Paul has thus summed up the qualifications of a deacon.¹

Deacons in like manner must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not covetous, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. Let these first be examined; then if not objected to, let them become deacons.² Their wives³ in like manner must be grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be men of one wife, ruling well their children and their own houses. For those who have served well as deacons gain for themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

It seems clear from this passage that the chief responsibility for selecting deacons devolved on the bishop and presbytery. S. Paul throughout the epistle gives Timothy minute advice as to the mode in which he is to manage the affairs of the Church, and he admonishes him as to his conduct in the choice of deacons. But though this duty devolved on the presbytery, the laity also were to be consulted. The candidate was to be subject to a public scrutiny, and was not to be admitted if valid objections were made against him.

It is not inconsistent with this view that the Seven mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles who were appointed to serve tables were selected by the people. The office of these Seven was altogether exceptional and temporary. The Grecian Jews, who were members of the Church at Jerusalem, had become dissatisfied with the manner in which alms were distributed. Thereupon the apostles determined to leave that matter to be settled by the laity, and after directing them to choose whom

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 8-13.

² καὶ οὗτοι δὲ δοκιμαζέσθωσαν πρῶτον, εἴτα διακονείτωσαν ἀνέγκλητοι ὄντες. Probably there is here an allusion to the Greek practice of *docimasia*. When any citizen of Athens was appointed to a public office, he was obliged to submit to a *docimasia* or scrutiny into his previous life and conduct, and on that occasion any person could object to him as unfit.—Smith, *Dict. of Antiquities*, s. v. 'Docimasia.'

³ So translated in the Authorised Version. The Revised Version has—'Women, in like manner, must be grave,' but this does not agree with the context. It is not likely that S. Paul would interpolate a direction respecting 'women' generally in the middle of his description of deacons. Moreover, the same Greek word in the next sentence undoubtedly means 'wife.'

they pleased for the office of almoners, subsequently ratified the choice by laying on of hands.¹

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (born about A.D. 200), says that the people have the power of rejecting unworthy priests and deacons.² The ecclesiastical canons at the end of the 'Apostolical Constitutions' contain this direction: 'Let a bishop be ordained by two or three bishops; a presbyter by one bishop, as also a deacon and the rest of the clergy.' These canons are believed by most critics to belong to the Apostolic age, and are of great historical value. The 'Apostolical Constitutions' give a beautiful form of prayer³ at the ordination of deacons, which closely resembles one of the prayers used in the same rite by the English Church to this day.

DEACONESSES.

In the polity of the primitive Church the ministry of women was distinctly recognised and carefully regulated.

The institution of the order of deaconesses is remarkable for several reasons. It affords very striking evidence of the activity and elaborate organisation of the Church of the first

¹ Acts vi. 1. The names of the Seven indicate that six of them were Grecian Jews. Consequently, the grievance of the discontented party in the Church was amply redressed.

² Epist. 67-8. The Roman Church retains in theory, at least, this right of the laity, for at the ordination of a deacon in that Church the Bishop asks the people whether they have anything to say against the ordination of the candidate. A similar form is observed in the English Church with respect to priests and deacons.

³ The prayer in the *Apostolical Constitutions* (b. viii. c. 18) is as follows:—

'O God Almighty, the true and faithful God, who art rich unto all that call upon Thee in truth, who art fearful in counsels and wise in understanding, who art powerful and great, hear our prayer, O Lord, and let Thine ears receive our supplication, and cause the light of Thy countenance to shine upon this Thy servant who is to be ordained to the office of a deacon, and replenish him with Thy Holy Spirit, and with power, as Thou didst replenish Stephen, who was Thy martyr, and follower of the sufferings of Thy Christ. Do Thou render him worthy to discharge acceptably the ministration of a deacon steadily, unblameably, and without reproof, that thereby he may attain a higher degree through the mediation of Thy only begotten Son, with whom glory, honour, and worship be to Thee and the Holy Spirit for ever. Amen.'

It is very interesting to compare this prayer with the collect in the Form of making Deacons in the English Prayer Book.

century. Another noteworthy circumstance connected with this institution is its ultimate history. It is the only clerical order sanctioned by the apostles which has been abolished. In the Western Church the order of deaconesses was gradually abolished by decrees of councils after the sixth century, and it ceased to exist in the Eastern Church after the eighth century.¹

Let us first advert to the notices of this order in the New Testament. In his Epistle to the Romans, S. Paul says² :—

I commend unto you Phœbe our sister, who is a deaconess of the Church that is at Cenchrea : that ye receive her, in the Lord, worthily of the saints, and assist her in what business she may have need of you : for she hath been a succourer of many, and of my own self.

This Phœbe was travelling to Rome on some business, probably connected with a lawsuit. It seems clear that she was a widow, for the manners of the times would not have suffered a spinster or married woman to travel alone or engage in matters of business. Phœbe is here described as deaconess of the Church of Cenchrea, a place about eight miles from Corinth, where this epistle was written. As S. Paul associates the name of Phœbe with a particular church, it may be reasonably inferred that she was a recognised office-bearer in that church.

S. Paul, in his various admonitions to Timothy respecting the government of the Church, writes as follows³ :—

Take care of widows who are entirely bereft. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show piety to their own family and requite their progenitors ; for this is acceptable in the sight of God.

Now she that is entirely bereft and solitary sets her hope on God, and continues in the supplications and the prayers night and day. But she that giveth herself to pleasure is dead while she liveth. And these things command, that they may be without reproach.

But if any one provideth not for his own, and especially his

¹ Pelliccia, *Polity of the Christian Church*, b. i. s. 2, c. 1.

² οὖσαν διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κενχρεαῖς, Rom. xvi. 1.

³ 1 Tim. v. 3-15.

own household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.

Let a widow be enrolled ' not under sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, well esteemed for good works ; if she hath brought up children, if she hath entertained strangers, if she hath washed the feet of saints, if she hath ministered to the afflicted, if she hath diligently followed every good work. But younger widows refuse : for when they have waxed wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, having censure, because they have broken their former vow.² Moreover, they learn to be idle, going about from house to house ; and not only idle, but tattlers and busybodies, also speaking what they ought not. I desire, therefore, that the younger women marry, bear children, rule their households, and give none occasion to the adversary for reproach ; for already some are turned aside after Satan.

This passage is somewhat perplexing, but if we read it attentively the meaning becomes clear. S. Paul is here discussing simultaneously two distinct subjects—almsgiving to necessitous widows and the appointment of widows to offices in the Church. With regard to the first he says that if they have children or grandchildren these should maintain them ; that burden ought not to be cast upon the Church except with respect to widows who are quite unprotected. We must remember that this duty of maintaining widows was observed by the Christian Church from its very commencement.³

The second subject to which S. Paul here refers is the appointment of women to be ministers in the Church. He

¹ καταλεγέσθω.

² ἔχουσαι κρίμα ὅτι τὴν πρώτην πίστιν ἠθέτησαν. The translation in the Authorised Version, ' having damnation because they have cast off their first faith,' and the similar translation in the Revised Version, cannot possibly express the apostle's meaning. He cannot be supposed to say women incur damnation merely for marrying again, for he immediately afterwards advises them to do so. What he does condemn is the breach of a vow. Πίστιν ἀθετεῖν undoubtedly means to break a pledge, as in *Polybius*, viii. 2, 5.

The *Apostolical Constitutions* (b. iii. c. 7) condemn the second marriage of a Church-widow, ' because she has waxed wanton against Christ and not kept her vow.'

³ ' Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration ' (Acts vi. 1).

says they must not be less than sixty years of age. Women who have not attained that age are to be refused admission to the office. It is quite clear that this regulation is not connected with almsgiving, for the apostle certainly would not lay down a rule that necessitous persons should not be relieved unless they were sixty years of age. He refers evidently to an office in the Church; and the nature of that office is very clearly shown by the description of the qualifications required. The persons chosen must have experience in the nurture of children, and be zealous in works of charity and mercy.

Such persons' names are to be inscribed on a Church roll, a register which is to be kept for the purpose.¹ They are to make a solemn promise to devote themselves for the rest of their lives to the work. Younger widows are not to be admitted, lest they should be tempted to marry again, and so break their vow.

It is doubtful whether deaconesses were ordained by laying on of hands in Apostolic times. S. Paul speaks of enrolment as the mode by which women were admitted to the office, and this seems to exclude the idea that they were admitted by ordination. The 'Apostolical Constitutions' in one place² expressly include widows among those Church officers who are not ordained. But curiously enough, in a preceding chapter of the same book³ there is a direction that the bishop is to lay his hands upon her, 'in the presence of the presbytery and of the deacons and deaconesses.' The explanation of this contradiction probably is that the passage first mentioned is of an earlier date than the passage last mentioned. There is no doubt that in the second and subsequent centuries deaconesses were ordained.⁴

The principal duties of deaconesses were to instruct female catechumens, to assist in baptising them by immersion, to direct female members of the Christian congregations to their seats, and to take charge of sick and indigent women.

Several councils of the fifth and sixth centuries directed the

¹ This Church roll was anciently called a canon. The Empress Helena entertained at a feast the virgins whose names were enrolled in the Canon of the Churches.—Pelliccia, *Polity*, b. i. s. 2, c. 3. ² *Apost. Const.* b. viii. c. 25.

³ *Ib.* c. 19.

⁴ Pelliccia, *Polity*, b. i. s. 2, c. 1.

abolition of the order of deaconesses. Various reasons for this measure have been suggested. A Council of Orleans¹ in the sixth century assigned as a reason the frailty of deaconesses. Another potent cause, it may be surmised, was the progress of monachism. When nunneries became established as separate religious communities, under strict discipline and control, the order of deaconesses, who generally lived at their own homes, and therefore enjoyed comparative freedom, fell into disfavour and discredit.

It will be convenient to recapitulate briefly the principal conclusions from the authorities cited in this chapter:—

1. Bishops at the commencement of the Apostolic era were not distinguished from other presbyters, but before the close of that era became a distinct order in the Church.

2. Bishops, priests, and deacons were all chosen with the consent of the laity, declared at the time of ordination.

3. Only bishops and priests might celebrate the Eucharist; but deacons might preach with the license of the bishop.

4. The bishop presided over a council of presbyters and deacons, which managed the affairs of the Church: the laity also being frequently consulted.

5. There was in the Apostolic age a regular order of deaconesses, whose duties related principally to works of charity and the preservation of order in the congregations.

This constitution of the early Christian Church strongly resembled that of the coeval Jewish synagogues. Every synagogue had a council of presbyters, with a president or patriarch at its head, and had also its Chazzan, or minister, whose duties were analogous to those of a deacon.

The president of the synagogue was of the same order as his presbyters. Honour and respect were shown to him as head of the council and chief of the synagogue; but the other presbyters were invariably regarded as his colleagues. The power and authority of the president and his colleagues were nearly the same. The only power which the president had

¹ Cited by Pelliccia, *Polity*, b. i. s. 2, c. 1.

distinct from that of the presbyters was that of ordaining. In every other case the president could do nothing without his presbyters, and in all matters of deliberation a majority of votes decided the question.

The similarity of the Jewish and Christian constitution is also shown in the correspondence between the office of Chazzan, or minister, and that of deacon. Every synagogue had its Chazzan, whose duties were such as these:—To take the roll of the law from the ark, and hand it to the reader, to blow the trumpet, to announce the approach of the Sabbath, to take care of the synagogue and its furniture.

That the form of Church government adopted by the apostles was adapted to the purposes for which it was designed is seen by the results. Notwithstanding the difficulties with which Christianity had to contend, it became so widely diffused before the end of the first century that there was not a city of importance throughout the Roman Empire in which the new religion was not preached. Government by a council of bishops, priests, and deacons, with a frequent appeal to laity, combined the most useful attributes of monarchy and democracy. It was in the strict sense of the term a constitutional system: that is to say, there was a mutual dependence of its parts. The members of the Church were for the most part unlearned, and the religion new. It was therefore of the utmost importance that there should be set over each presbytery some one of superior learning and authority, versed in the apostles' doctrine, and authorised to 'reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching,'¹ or, if need were, to reprove 'sharply.'² On the other hand, it was essential that these congregations, placed amidst enemies and without protection from the State, should have a voice in the election of their ministers and in the management of the affairs of the Church.

This primitive system therefore was a thoroughly practical one, and commended itself to the common sense and experience of those for whom it was designed. The results were the most momentous which have occurred in the history of the human

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 2.

² Titus i. 13.

race. From the time that the disciples of the new faith began to preach and to teach, the days of Paganism were numbered. It is true that the victory of Christian over the brutal, cruel and licentious system of heathen worship was not completed in the days of the apostles, but before the last of them left the earth, the temples of the gods had begun to be deserted, and Paganism tottered to its fall.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

WE have seen how the individual congregations of the primitive Church were constituted and ordered, and have next to inquire into their relations towards each other. Were they wholly independent, or were they in any way connected?

That intercourse of some kind was maintained between them is abundantly clear from various passages in the New Testament.

For instance, there was a practice of giving to missionaries letters of commendation from one church to another. When Apollos went from Ephesus to Achaia, 'the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him.'¹

Another mode of communication was the interchange of Apostolic epistles. 'When this epistle shall have been read among you,' says S. Paul, writing to the Colossians, 'cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea.'² Still more interesting evidence of the concord which subsisted among the Christian communities was the practice of relieving the temporal necessities of each other. Two instances are recorded in which S. Paul was the bearer of contributions for the relief of the brethren in Judæa, one during the famine in the reign of Claudius Cæsar (A.D. 44), and one about fourteen years later.³

But by far the most important instance recorded in the New Testament of the union of churches in the Apostolic age is the assembly of the Council at Jerusalem, and the issue of

¹ Acts xviii. 27.

² Colossians iv. 16. In the Authorised Version ἀναγνώσθῃ is wrongly translated 'is read,' instead of 'shall have been read.'

³ Acts xi. 29; Romans xv. 26.

decrees by that Council, directed to the Gentile converts in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia. This missive was not merely a letter of advice, but 'decrees for to keep, which had been ordained by the apostles and presbyters that were at Jerusalem.'¹ It is clear, then, that the Church at Jerusalem at that period did assume authority to direct other churches on matters of doctrine and practice.

In the pages of Eusebius we have a record of that meeting of apostles already noticed, when they appointed Simeon the son of Clopas to be the successor of S. James as Bishop of Jerusalem.²

There is not any reason to doubt the accuracy of this statement. It is probable in itself; for the apostles who survived S. James would naturally consider it necessary to provide a successor in the government of what was then the chief church of Christendom. Besides that, we know that Eusebius had access to records which have since been lost. In another part of his history he expressly states that his information respecting the earliest bishops of Jerusalem was derived from written documents. 'I have learned from writings,' he says, 'that down to the invasion of the Jews under Adrian, there were fifteen successions of bishops in that Church, all of whom they say were Hebrews, and received the knowledge of Christ pure and unadulterated.' He then proceeds to give the names of these fifteen bishops, placing S. James first and Simeon second.³

So long as the apostles remained on earth they consulted and co-operated together for the general welfare of the Church, and other disciples were present at their councils, as in the instance last cited—and thus a communion of churches was maintained.

We have next to inquire whether after the Apostolic ages this system was continued.

First, let us consider the probabilities of the case. The

¹ Acts xvi. 4.

² *Eccl. Hist.* b. iii. c. 11.

³ *Ib.* b. iv. c. 5. In another place (b. vi. c. 20) Eusebius states that he collected materials for his history from the library of Ælia, which was the name given to Jerusalem in the time of Adrian.

Christians everywhere lived among adversaries. By Jews and Gentiles they were equally hated. It was therefore of vital importance to them that they should afford to each other all possible aid and support. Besides, is it credible that having been taught by the apostles to take mutual counsel, they should immediately after the Apostolic age resolve to live wholly independently of one another? It is infinitely more probable that they would endeavour to maintain the system which their first teachers had established.

History distinctly confirms this conclusion. We have ample proof that the intercourse between churches continued by means of epistles, messages, and councils.

There have been preserved several epistles of undoubted authenticity which show this. One of these venerable documents, written by Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna—who had been a disciple of S. John—commences thus: ‘Polycarp and the presbyters with him to the Church of God sojourning at Philippi: mercy to you, and peace from God Almighty and from the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, be multiplied.’ It appears by this epistle that the Church of Philippi had invited the advice of that of Smyrna, for Polycarp expressly says, ‘These things, brethren, I write to you concerning righteousness, not because I take anything upon myself, but because ye have invited me to do so.’¹

The numerous epistles written by Ignatius, another disciple of S. John, when under sentence of death, show how strong was the bond of union among the earliest churches. The following passage gives a deeply interesting account of the sympathy of the Christians with him in his sufferings:—

Wherefore, with great alacrity and joy through his desire to suffer, he came down from Antioch to Seleucia, from which place he set sail. And after a great deal of suffering he came to Smyrna, where he disembarked with great joy and hastened to see the holy Polycarp, his fellow disciple and Bishop of Smyrna; for they had both in old times been disciples of John the apostle. Being then brought to him, and having communicated to him some spiritual gifts and glorying in his

¹ *Polycarp to Philippians*, c. 3.

bonds, he entreated of him to labour along with him, for the fulfilment of his desire, earnestly, indeed, asking this of the whole Church. For the cities and churches of Asia had welcomed the holy man through their bishops and presbyters and deacons, all hastening to meet him, if by any means they might receive from him some spiritual gift.¹

Important evidence respecting the relations existing between Christian Churches in the first century is furnished by the memorable epistle of Clement, Bishop of Rome. This document deserves the most careful consideration, not only with reference to the general questions hitherto discussed, but also with reference to the relations subsisting between the Church of Rome in particular and the rest of Christendom.

The occasion on which this epistle was written is thus described by Eusebius :—

Of this Clement there is one epistle extant, acknowledged as genuine, of considerable length, which he wrote in the name of the Church at Rome to that of Corinth at the time when there was a dissension in the latter. This we know to have been publicly read for common benefit in most of the churches both in former times and in our own.²

This epistle was written after the death of SS. Peter and Paul, but certainly before the end of the first century. A serious schism had arisen in the Church of Corinth : some of the presbyters had been displaced from their office and great disorder had arisen. And S. Clement writes in the name of the Roman Church to rebuke the factious party in the Church of Corinth.

The following are a few of the more striking passages :—

We consider that we have been somewhat tardy in giving heed to the matters about which you consulted us,³ dearly beloved, and to the detestable and unholy sedition so alien and strange to the elect of God, which a few headstrong and self-willed persons have kindled to such a pitch of madness

¹ *Martyrdom of Ignatius*, c. 3.

² *Ecclesiastical History*, b. iii. c. 16.

³ περὶ τῶν ἐπιζητομένων παρ' ὑμῶν πραγμάτων.

that your name, once revered and renowned in the sight of all men, hath been greatly reviled.¹

It will be no light sin for us if we thrust out those who have offered the gifts of the bishop's office unblameably and holily. Blessed are those presbyters who have gone before, seeing that their departure was fruitful and ripe; for they have no fear lest anyone should remove them from their appointed place. For we see that ye have displaced certain persons, though they were living honourably, from the ministration which they had kept blamelessly.²

Wherefore are there strifes, and wraths, and factions, and divisions, and war among you? Have we not one God and one Christ and one Spirit poured out upon us? And is there not one calling in Christ? Wherefore do we tear and rend asunder the members of Christ and stir up factions against our own body, and reach such a pitch of folly as to forget that we are members one of another?³

If certain persons should be disobedient unto the words spoken by Him through us, let them understand that they will entangle themselves in no slight transgression and danger.⁴

Ye will give us great joy and gladness if ye render obedience unto the things written by us through the Holy Spirit, and root out the unrighteous anger of your jealousy according to the entreaty which we have made for peace and concord in this letter. And we have also sent faithful and prudent men that have walked among us from youth unto old age unblameably, who shall also be witnesses between you and us. And this we have done that ye might know that we have had and still have every solicitude that ye should speedily be at rest.⁵

Now send ye back speedily unto us our messengers Claudius Ephebus and Valerius Bito, together with Fortunatus, also in peace and with joy, to the end that they may the more quickly report the peace and concord which is prayed for and earnestly desired by us, that we may also the more speedily rejoice over your good order.⁶

The combination of command, rebuke, and entreaty in this epistle is very remarkable. The Corinthians are warned of

¹ *S. Clement to the Corinthians*, c. 1.

² *Ib.* c. 44.

³ *Ib.* c. 46.

⁴ *Ib.* c. 59.

⁵ *Ib.* c. 63.

⁶ *Ib.* c. 65. Bishop Lightfoot's admirable translation of the Epistle has been here adopted, with one or two alterations.

the consequences of disobedience; they are told that the admonitions addressed to them are 'written by us through the Holy Spirit,' but reproof is tempered by words of affectionate supplication.

What authority had the Church of Rome thus to address another body of Christians? The question is one of great historical interest with reference to what are called the Petrine claims. In the first place we observe that there is no reference throughout the epistle to any such claims. It is nowhere suggested that the Roman Church has precedence on account of its connection with S. Peter. On the contrary—as we have shown in a preceding chapter—the apostles SS. Peter and Paul are treated in this epistle as fellow labourers, and it is expressly and emphatically asserted that they were equal in authority.

It is also remarkable that though S. Clement, Bishop of Rome, was undoubtedly the author of this epistle, his name nowhere appears in it. The commencement is well worth consideration:—

The Church of God which sojourneth in Rome to the Church of God that sojourneth in Corinth, to them which are called and sanctified by the will of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to you and peace, from Almighty God through Jesus Christ, be multiplied.

The authority of the epistle, then, is derived not from S. Clement, as a successor of S. Peter, but from the 'Church of God which sojourneth at Rome.' The distinction is all important. About one hundred years later the Bishops of Rome began—as we shall see presently—to assume authority in their capacity of bishops to rule all Christendom. But there is no such pretension in this epistle of which Clement was the writer.

On the other hand, we do find undoubtedly that the Roman Church in the instance before us admonishes members of a neighbouring church. And we know that this admonition, so far from being resented, was approved by the rest of Christendom; for the epistle was publicly read for the common benefit in most of the churches. But it is most important to

observe that the admonition was in reply to an appeal from the Church of Corinth; for the epistle commences with an expression of regret for delay in giving heed 'to matters about which you consulted us.' There is no assumption of a right to dictate; no assertion of supremacy. Advice is given, but not until it is solicited; and the one congregation addresses the other as equals.

Two causes contributed to the importance of the early Roman Church. One was that, being situated in the capital of the Empire, it was more numerous and influential than any other. Another reason was that it had been instructed by two apostles, and therefore was deemed to be more thoroughly versed than any other in the principles of Christianity.

It was natural that what were styled Apostolic churches—that is, churches established by apostles—should be considered the principal depositories of doctrine.

Traverse (says Tertullian) the Apostolic churches in which to this very day the seats of the apostles preside, in which their own authentic letters are read, echoing the voice and representing the face of each. Is Achaia nearest to you? There you have Corinth. If you are not far from Macedonia, you have the Philippians and Thessalonians. If you go into Asia you have Ephesus. If you are near Italy you have Rome, from whence we have authority near at hand. How happy that church where apostles poured forth their teaching with their blood—where Peter suffered like the Lord, and Paul was crowned with martyrdom like John the Baptist.¹

The general purport of the advice given by Tertullian is, that in cases of doubt and controversy, the opinion of the nearest Apostolic Church should be sought, whether it happened to be Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, or any other Apostolic See.²

¹ Tertullian, *De Præscript.* c. 36.

² Irenæus gives very similar advice. 'Suppose there arise a dispute relative to some important question among us, should we not have recourse to the most ancient churches with which the apostles had constant intercourse, and learn from them what is certain and clear in regard to the question? For how should it be if the apostles had not left us writings? Would it not be necessary to follow the course of the tradition which they handed to those to whom they committed the churches?'—*Adv. Hær.* b. iii. c. 4.

There is a celebrated passage in Irenæus which is frequently quoted as a proof of the pre-eminence of the See of Rome at the time when he wrote—the latter part of the second century. The passage is very obscure, but the following rendering is submitted as a substantially correct one. After referring to the regular succession of bishops in the churches from the time of the apostles to his own, Irenæus proceeds:—

Since, however, it would be very tedious in such a volume as this to reckon up the successions of all the churches, we point to the greatest and most ancient and universally known church founded and established at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul, and the tradition which she has from the apostles and the faith declared to men, and which comes down to us by a succession of bishops; and we thus confound all those who in any manner, either through self-pleasing or vain-glory, or blindness or perverse opinion, adopt wrong conclusions [*præterquam oportet colligunt*]. For with this church, on account of its superior eminence, every church necessarily agrees—that is, the faithful everywhere—in whatsoever church the tradition of the apostles has been preserved.¹

¹ Irenæus, *Contra Hæreses*, lib. iii. c. 3. As the meaning of the passage is much disputed, the Latin text is subjoined:—

‘Sed quoniam valde longum est in hoc tali volumine omnium Ecclesiarum enumerare successiones, maximæ et antiquissimæ et omnibus cognitæ a gloriosissimis duobus apostolis, Petro et Paulo, Romæ fundatæ et constitutæ Ecclesiæ, eam quam habet ab apostolis traditionem et annuntiatam hominibus fidem, per successiones episcoporum pervenientem usque ad nos indicantes, confundimus eos qui quoque modo vel per sibi placentiâ, vel vanam gloriam, vel per cæcitatem et malam sententiam præterquam oportet colligunt. Ad hanc enim Ecclesiam propter potiorem principalitatem necesse est omnem convenire Ecclesiam, hoc est, eos qui sunt undique fideles, in quâ semper ab his qui sunt undique, conservata est ea quæ est ab apostolis traditio.’

The words here translated ‘adopt wrong conclusions’ are translated by Mr. Keble in Pusey’s *Library of the Fathers*, ‘meet in unlawful assemblies;’ but this translation introduces a totally irrelevant subject. Moreover, *colligo* is not a neuter verb. *Colligo* is used by Cicero in the sense of concluding or inferring: *Ita cogitatione et ratione collegit*; and one of the senses of *collectio* is an inference or conclusion: ‘Huic collectioni Peripateti corum quidam respondent.’—*Sen. Ep.* 86.

Mr. Keble thinks it probable that the word *principalitatem* stands for ἀρχή=origin, and cites passages from the Fathers, in which the word has that meaning.

Unfortunately, the original Greek in which this was written has not been preserved. The treatise of Irenæus 'Against Heresies' has come down to us in a very barbarous ancient Latin version, of which the style is obscure and the text corrupt. Whether the phrase here translated 'superior eminence' has that meaning, or rather should be translated 'superior origin,' is a matter of some doubt. The difference, however, is not very material. That Irenæus attributed to the Church of Rome a pre-eminence of some kind is beyond doubt. But that he did not concede to that Church a supreme authority over all Christendom is shown conclusively by a letter which he himself wrote to Victor, Bishop of Rome, in the latter part of the second century,¹ sharply rebuking him for assuming such authority.

This letter relates to the celebrated controversy about the time of observing Easter.² In the Asiatic Churches the date of that festival was fixed with reference to the Passover, without regard to the day of the week. The Western Churches, on the other hand, always commemorated the Passion on a Friday, and Easter on the following Sunday. The point in dispute may seem comparatively unimportant, but the controversy has a great historical value, as it furnishes valuable information respecting the government of the primitive Church.

The custom of observing the 'Saviour's Passover,' as it was termed, on the day of the Jews' Passover, was confined to the Churches of Asia. Eusebius states that synods of bishops of other churches were held, and that 'all unanimously by letters sent to the faithful everywhere an ecclesias-

This passage from Irenæus is discussed in Dr. Wordsworth's *S. Hippolytus and the Church of Rome*, p. 281. Dr. Wordsworth says the meaning of Irenæus is that it may be taken for granted that every church coincides with that of Rome.

¹ Victor became Bishop of Rome about A.D. 180.

² The Passover was on the fourteenth day of the month Abib. Hence the usage here mentioned was called the Quartodeciman usage. Abib, otherwise Nisan, was the first month of the Hebrew civil year.

tical decree¹ that the mystery of the Lord's resurrection should not be celebrated on any other day than the Lord's-day.' Eusebius refers to letters extant in his own times from the Bishops of Cæsarea, Jerusalem, Rome, Gaul, and Corinth, all laying down the same rule.

It appears that Victor, Bishop of Rome, threatened excommunication to the Bishops of Asia unless they conformed with this practice of the Western Churches. This they refused to do, and Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, addressed in their name a synodical letter to Victor and the Church of Rome, of which several interesting portions have been preserved by Eusebius.

In this letter Polycrates states that the Asiatic use with reference to Easter had the sanction of two of the apostles—S. Philip, 'who sleeps in Hierapolis,' and S. John, 'who rested on the bosom of the Lord, who also was a priest, and wore the sacerdotal petalum.' The letter proceeds to give the names of many other bishops and martyrs who kept Easter in the same way. Polycrates adds that he is not to be intimidated. 'I therefore, brethren, who have been sixty-five years in the Lord, am not terrified by the things threatened against me, for they who are greater than I have said—We ought to obey God rather than man.'

Upon this (says Eusebius) Victor, the Bishop of the Romans, endeavoured to cut off all the dioceses of Asia as heterodox, together with the neighbouring churches, from the common unity,² and he published letters, by which he declared all the brethren there to be absolutely excommunicated. But this was not approved by all the bishops. They exhorted him to regard those things which promote peace and unity and love toward one's neighbour.

There are extant expressions of theirs severely condemning³ Victor, among whom Irenæus, in the name of the brethren over whom he presided in Gaul, wrote an epistle, in which he maintains indeed that the mystery of the Lord's resurrection should be celebrated only on the Lord's-day, but at the same

¹ ἐκκλησιαστικὸν δόγμα.—*Eccles. Hist.* b. v. c. 23.

² τῆς κοινῆς ἐνώσεως.

³ πληκτικώτερον καταπομένων.

time temperately admonishes Victor that he should not cut off whole churches which observe a custom handed down to them from antiquity.

Eusebius then gives some passages from this synodical epistle of Irenæus, who observes that though the earlier Bishops of Rome did not allow the Quartodeciman usage, they lived in peace with bishops of other churches which adopted it. Irenæus gives as an instance a remarkable anecdote of a visit of Polycarp, the disciple of S. John the apostle, to Anicetus, Bishop of Rome.

When the most blessed Polycarp went to Rome in the time of Anicetus, and there was some little controversy between them upon other matters, they were at peace with each other, not contending much on this subject. Neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp to discontinue the practice which he had observed continually with John, the disciple of our Lord, and the other apostles with whom he had been familiar. Neither did Polycarp endeavour to persuade Anicetus to observe it, since Anicetus said he was bound to maintain the practice of the presbyters who preceded him, which things being so, they were in communion with each other. And in church Anicetus, for the purpose of showing respect, gave up to Polycarp the office of celebrating the Eucharist. And they parted from each other in peace; those who observed and those who did not observe the practice maintaining the peace of the whole church.¹

This narrative furnishes very valuable information as to the relations subsisting between the earliest churches. It is clear that Irenæus, though he preferred the Western usage, did not regard the date of Easter as a matter of great moment. What he did regard as vitally important was Christian unity. He preferred concord to uniformity.

Another matter equally clear is that in the time of Irenæus the Bishop of Rome claimed an authority over other bishops which they refused to admit. The Asiatic Churches refused to obey him, and the Gallic Church rebuked him. These facts are absolutely fatal to the theory that the Roman Church was at that time supreme in Christendom. And if it

¹ Irenæus, cited by Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* b. v. c. 24.

was not supreme then neither could it have been at any earlier period, for there is no reason for supposing that any of the predecessors of Victor had a jurisdiction greater than his.

Up to this period—the close of the second century—the constitution of the Catholic Churches seems to have been a federation, not a monarchy. Eusebius refers to ‘numerous synods and convocations of bishops,’ which discussed the Easter controversy, and cites documents extant in his day which contained their resolutions. The Western Churches, he says, were unanimous, so that there must have been some method of communication among them, and a practical though not a formal union.

After the last council of the apostles at Jerusalem there is not the slightest trace of any recognised central authority in the Church in the first or second centuries. Councils were frequent, but there was not any general or œcumenical council until that of Nicæa in Bithynia (A.D. 325), by which the Nicene Creed was settled. This council was convoked by Constantine, the first Roman Emperor who professed Christianity, and before his time the assembly of a general council would have been almost impossible.

The relation of Christians to the surrounding heathen (says Dr. Pusey) was doubtless in early times a hindrance to the meeting of large synods of bishops. Even in the intervals of peace there was always imminent peril of a general persecution: general toleration did not preclude local or partial persecution: in all persecutions the bishops (as the captains of the Christian army) were the especial object of heathen enmity or malice: any gathering from distant parts would have given colour to the imputation of disaffection and disloyalty in which Christians were involved by their antagonism to the religion of the Emperors.¹

But the practice of summoning local councils was much earlier. Ignatius, writing to Polycarp very early in the second century, urges him² ‘to assemble a very solemn council, and to elect one whom you greatly love, and know to be a man of activity,’ to be sent to Syria.

¹ Pusey, *Councils of the Church*, p. 49.

² *Epist. to Polycarp*, c. 7.

Writing in the latter part of the second century, Apollinaris, Bishop of Hierapolis, referring to the heresy of Montanus, says, 'The faithful held frequent conferences in many places throughout Asia on this account, and having examined these novel doctrines pronounced them vain, rejected them as heresy, and expelled from communion with the Church those who held them.'¹

Again, Tertullian writing about the end of the same century, speaks of numerous councils in which the canon of the New Testament had been discussed.² And in another place he refers to the practice of holding councils in Greece: 'Throughout the provinces of Greece there are held in definite localities councils gathered out of universal churches, by means of which not only all deeper questions are handled for the common benefit, but the actual representation of the whole Christian name is celebrated with great veneration. And how worthy a thing is this, that under the auspices of faith men should congregate from all quarters to Christ.'³

That this practice of mutual consultation in the second century was a continuation of the practice of the first century can hardly be doubted. The necessities and difficulties of the first Christians rendered frequent conference a matter of the utmost importance. Of their polity and mode of administering the affairs of the Church we get only a few glimpses, but such as they are they are deeply interesting. The details of the system are unknown, but some of the general characteristics are clearly discerned. The churches were accustomed to seek the advice of each other, though they did not recognise that supreme authority of the Church of Rome which she had already begun to arrogate to herself.

Of the practical unity of the early churches the most decisive proof is derived from the fact that they agreed in doctrine. Tertullian has argued this point with great force, in a passage in which he replies to the accusation of certain heretics of his

¹ Quoted Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* b. v. c. 16.

² Speaking of the 'Pastor' or 'Shepherd' of Hermas, he says that it was 'habitually judged by every council, even your own, to be apocryphal and false.'—*De Pudicitia*, c. 10.

³ *De Jejuniis*, c. 13.

day, that the churches had not adhered to the doctrine of the apostles. 'Is it likely,' he asks, 'that so many churches, and they so great, should have gone astray into one and the same faith? No casualty distributed among many men issues in one and the same result. Error of doctrine in the churches must necessarily have produced various issues. When, however, that which is deposited among many is found to be one and the same, it is not the result of error, but of tradition.'¹

The style of the passage is somewhat difficult, but the meaning is evident. By 'tradition'² Tertullian means that oral as well as written teaching on which the early Christians were dependent for religious instruction; he argues irresistibly that the agreement in doctrine was a mark of the correctness of the teaching. If the various congregations had deviated from the Apostolic faith, it was excessively improbable that they would all have deviated in precisely the same direction.

We may use the same argument to prove the unity of the whole Church. The various members agreed in doctrine; there must therefore have been an interchange of thought and an effective Church government which produced this agreement. That this identity existed is shown by the Creed or summary of faith, which Tertullian gives³ as the universal

¹ *De Præscript.* c. 23.

² S. Paul uses the equivalent Greek word for tradition (*παράδοσις*) in the same sense. He bids the Thessalonians to withdraw themselves 'from every rother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us' (2 Thess. iii. 6). In the same epistle the Thessalonians are told to 'hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle' (2 Thess. ii. 15).

³ 'Now with regard to this rule of faith—that we may from this point acknowledge what it is that we defend—it is, you must know, that which prescribes the belief that there is only one God, and that He is none other than the Creator of the world: Who produced all things out of nothing through His own Word first of all sent forth. That this Word is called His Son, and under the name of God was seen in divers manners by the patriarchs; heard at all times in the prophets; at last brought down by the spirit and power of the Father into the Virgin Mary; was made flesh in her womb, and being born of her went forth as Jesus Christ; thenceforth He preached the new law and new promise of the kingdom of heaven; worked miracles. Having been crucified, He rose again the third day; having ascended into the heavens He sat at the right hand of the Father; sent instead of Himself the power of the Holy Ghost to lead such as believe; will come with glory to take the saints to the enjoyment of everlasting life and of the heavenly promises, and to condemn

rule of believers, and which closely corresponds with the formulary now known as the Apostles' Creed.

The means by which this uniformity was secured were fourfold—first, care in the selection of the ministers of the Church; secondly, frequent consultation among them; thirdly, diligent preparation of candidates for baptism; fourthly, rigorous exclusion of heretics and schismatics.

On the first and second heads enough has been said. With regard to the third, it may be stated briefly that from the earliest times extreme care was taken in the instruction of those who desired admission into the Church. Thus, Justin Martyr, writing almost within the Apostolic age, says: 'As many as are persuaded, and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray, and to intreat God with fasting;' and are then to be baptised;¹ and Dionysius of Alexandria states that 'decrees have been passed in the greatest councils of bishops, that those who come from the heretics are first to be instructed, and then are to be washed and purified from the faith of their old and impure leaven.'² To the same effect, Tertullian makes it one of the most grievous charges against the heretics of his own day, 'that their catechumens are considered perfect before they are fully taught.'³ It seems beyond doubt that this practice was continued from Apostolic times; for from the first it must have been necessary to resort to such a method of preparation of the uninstructed heathen.⁴

the wicked to everlasting fire, after the resurrection of both shall have happened, together with the restoration of their flesh.'—*De Præscript.* c. 13.

¹ *Apology*, b. i. c. 61.

² Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* b. vii. c. 5. Tertullian also (*De Pænitentia*, c. 6) refers to an interval of probation before baptism. Origen presided over a celebrated school for catechetical instruction at Alexandria. At a very early period the persons instructed were called catechumens.

³ *De Præscript.* c. 41.

⁴ Clement of Alexandria has recorded a distinct instance of the practice in the Apostolic age. He states that S. John the apostle committed a youth to the care of a presbyter, who 'taking the youth home that was committed to him, educated, restrained, and cherished, and at length baptised him.'—Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* b. iii. c. 23. In a preceding chapter the opinion has been expressed that the narrative is substantially accurate (*ante*, chap. viii.).

And while this caution was observed with respect to the admission of Jewish or heathen converts into the Church, equal care was taken to exclude disobedient members of the Church. There are, in the New Testament, frequent references to the excommunication of schismatics, which discipline was exercised circumspectly but rigorously. S. Paul bids Titus to reject 'the heretical man, after a first and second admonition.'¹ The Roman Christians are bidden by the same authority to turn away from those who cause 'divisions and occasions for stumbling;' and the Thessalonians are directed to withdraw themselves 'from every brother that walketh disorderly.'²

In like manner the Corinthians are directed 'not to keep company, if any man that is named as a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no not to eat.'³

From the very first the Christians perceived that unity was essential to the preservation of their faith. Over and over again is this principle inculcated in the New Testament. Of course there were in the primitive Church, as there are now, men wise in their own conceit, who regarded order and union as matters of little importance. But not so thought the apostles. S. Paul rebukes the Corinthians because there were 'schisms' and 'heresies' among them, and exclaims, 'Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.'⁴ So in his pathetic farewell to the Church of Ephesus he denounced the schismatics as grievous wolves,—'I know that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter among you, not sparing the flock;

¹ Titus iii. 10.

² Romans xvi. 17; 2 Thess. iii. 6. The discipline of excommunication was instituted by Christ Himself. If a 'brother' sinned he was to have three admonitions; first, privately; secondly, before witnesses; thirdly, 'if he refuse to hear them tell it unto the Church [i.e. the Christian congregation to which he belongs], and if he refuse to hear the Church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican' (Matt. xviii. 15).

³ 1 Cor. v. 11. The obvious meaning of the whole passage is this: You cannot entirely avoid communication with wicked men—to do that you must needs go out of the world. But if any man that is named a brother, and admitted into the Church, commits gross sin, you are to avoid all social intercourse with him.

⁴ 1 Cor. xi. 22.

and of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.'¹

The first Christians believed one Catholic and Apostolic Church. Ignatius, who sealed his testimony with his blood, says, 'Wherever there is Jesus Christ there is the Catholic Church,'² and this Catholic Church was not a mere abstract or sentimental union; it was a regularly constituted association of men who agreed to be bound by one system of rules and government.

The results accomplished by this union must appear to us marvellous when we consider the enormous difficulties which the first Christians had to encounter. Communication among them in an age when travelling by sea and land was slow and dangerous must have been tedious and frequently interrupted. Again, the persecutions to which they were subject made it impossible to hold their councils and assemblies openly. And yet with all these hindrances a marvellous identity of doctrine and discipline was maintained among them. The unity of the primitive Church is one of the prodigies of history.

¹ Acts xx. 29. Ignatius uses a similar figure. He likens heretics who denied the resurrection of Christ to beasts: 'I guard you beforehand from these beasts in the shape of men whom ye must not only not receive, but, if it be possible, not even meet. Only you must pray to God for them, if by any means they may be brought to repentance, which, however, will be very difficult.'—*Ad Smyrnæos*, c. 4.

² *Ib.* c. 8.

CHAPTER XV.

BAPTISM.

It was the object of the last chapter to show that the first Christians had in a very strict and literal sense 'One Lord, One faith, One baptism,' and that this union was exhibited not merely by agreement in matters of faith, but also by the close similarity of the institutions and government of the several congregations of which the Catholic Church was composed.

Not indeed that there was an absolute identity of rites and usages in all these congregations. We shall find on detailed examination that there were certain differences in these respects. The times for observing Easter, for example, were not the same in the East and the West. The liturgical forms were not precisely alike; but the differences were in matters of detail, and in essential particulars the practice of all the churches with respect to religious observances was alike throughout Christendom.

It is obvious that a description of primitive Christianity would be very imperfect without some account of those rites and ceremonies which distinguished the first Christians from the Jews and the heathen. It will therefore be the object of the subsequent chapters to give an outline of the history of the sacraments, the observance of the Lord's-day, and generally of early Christian worship.

The subject is one of vast extent, and here all that can be attempted is a concise summary of the most important particulars. The endeavour will also be made to avoid as far as possible questions of doctrine, and to confine the attention to historical facts.

As Baptism was the rite by which disciples were admitted into the communion of the Church, it is natural to commence

with an account of that sacrament. But in order to have clear ideas respecting the origin of this institution, we must advert to the practice of baptising proselytes before the Christian era.

The practice of baptising proselytes existed among the Jews before the birth of Christ. The evidence in support of this statement will be given presently; but it will be convenient in the first place to consider some of the Mosaic laws respecting proselytes.

Their great lawgiver had taught the Jews, after their exodus from Egypt and before they entered the promised land, to avoid all intercourse with heathenism. The Israelites were a 'holy people.' The Lord had chosen them 'to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.'¹ Accordingly they were to keep themselves entirely separate from the surrounding nations: 'Thou shalt make no covenant with them; neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son; for they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods.'²

The reason here assigned for this rigorous exclusiveness shows that it was not dictated by mere intolerance and unreasoning fanaticism. The Jews were to keep aloof from the heathen, not because they were foreigners, but because they were idolaters. It was therefore quite consistent with the rule that foreigners who adopted the Jewish faith should be admitted to Jewish rights and privileges.

Accordingly we find that the laws with regard to proselytes were framed with the utmost liberality. For example:—

When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land.³

The law was to be absolutely the same for the Jew and the proselyte: 'Ye shall have one manner of law for the stranger,

¹ Deut. vii. 6.

² Deut. vii. 2-4.

³ Exodus xii. 48.

as for one of your own country.'¹ The religious ceremonies were the same for both. The prohibition to work on the Sabbath included 'the stranger within thy gate.'² So, with regard to the meat-offering and drink-offering, 'one ordinance shall be for you of the congregation, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.'³ In all these passages the word 'stranger' means 'proselyte,' and is so interpreted in the Septuagint.

The law of Moses allowed the stranger who sojourned among the Jews to adopt their religion if he pleased, but did not expressly compel him to do so. But the Jews probably at all times regarded with dislike the intrusion of strangers who would not conform with their religion, and in later times proselytism was often forced upon reluctant foreigners. This was the general policy of the Asmonæan rulers of Judæa. Thus Hyrcanus, one of those rulers (about B.C. 130), when he extended his dominions by the conquest of the Idumæans required them to be circumcised, and—says Josephus—'they were so desirous of living in the country of their fathers that they submitted to the use of circumcision, and the rest of the Jewish ways of living; at which time this therefore befell them, that they were hereafter no other than Jews.'⁴ His son and successor Aristobulus 'made war against Ituræa, and added a great part of it to Judæa, and compelled the inhabitants, if they would continue in that country, to be circumcised, and live according to the Jewish laws.'⁵

The Jews regarded the Gentiles as ceremonially unclean. The Gentile child was unclean from the moment of its birth. The mere presence of heathenism brought defilement. The uncircumcised stranger who trod the sacred soil of Judæa polluted it. Of this feeling Josephus in his 'Life' has recorded a curious instance. At the commencement of the war with the Romans he had been appointed to command the Jewish

¹ Levit. xxiv. 22.

² Exodus xx. 10.

³ Numbers xv. 15.

⁴ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xiii. c. 9, s. 1.

⁵ *Ib.* c. 11, s. 3. Alexander, the successor of Aristobulus, not long afterwards took possession of the city of Pella and utterly destroyed it, because the inhabitants would not change their religious rites for those of the Jews.—*Ib.* c. 15, s. 4.

forces in Galilee; and while he was there certain non-Jewish subjects of King Agrippa, who had in some way offended that potentate, fled to Galilee for refuge. The Jewish inhabitants, however, demanded that these refugees should be expelled unless they submitted to be circumcised. Josephus, however, determined to protect them. 'Every one,' he said, 'ought to worship God according to his own inclination, and not to be constrained by force.'¹

While the uncircumcised heathen was looked upon with abhorrence, the circumcised proselyte was by no means regarded with favour. Legally and technically he was a Jew to all intents and purposes, though in practice he was treated as greatly inferior to the native Jew. The Talmud repeatedly speaks unfavourably of proselytes. In one place it is said that they hinder the coming of the Messias; in another they are called 'a scab of Israel.'² When Herod, who was a circumcised Idumæan, went to Jerusalem, with the sanction of the Roman Senate, to take possession of his kingdom, his opponents contemptuously called him a 'half Jew,' and said he was not worthy to reign over the Jewish nation.³

That baptism was one of the rites by which proselytes were admitted to the Jewish communion will be shown presently; but before we advert to the evidence on this subject, it will be convenient to refer briefly to another closely connected with it—the code of laws and regulations respecting ceremonial uncleanness and purification. These laws⁴ were

¹ Josephus, *Life*, s. 23.

² Lightfoot, *Exercitationes on S. Matthew* xxiii. 15.

³ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xiv. c. 15, s. 2.

⁴ The tract in the *Mishna*, entitled 'Abodah Sarah' ('De Cultu Peregrino'), is very curious. The following specimens of rules are taken almost at random from Surenhusius (vol. iii. p. 364). For three days before the Saturnalia and other idolatrous feasts a Jew might not sell anything to an idolater. A city in which such a feast was celebrated was to be avoided. A Jew might not assist in building a basilica for heathen worship, nor in making ornaments for idols. He might let a stable or barn to an idolater, but not a dwelling-house into which he could bring idols. The Jew might not purchase from an idolater wine prepared by him, nor milk milked by him, lest they contained anything unclean. If, however, the wine was prepared, and the milk milked in the presence of the Jew, so that he was satisfied that they were clean, he might use them. A Jewish midwife might not assist gratuitously at the birth of the

elaborated with a remarkable minuteness, which at first sight may appear almost frivolous. But it must be remembered that the Jews had been taught the precept, 'there shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand.'¹ This precept is in the Talmud carried into effect by regulations, which however trivial some of them may appear, have this to be said in their favour, that they were based on an abhorrence of idolatry, and on a determined avoidance of all complicity with it. The Jews, under the Roman Empire, saw idolatry not as we do—remotely and historically—but practically present before them in all its hideousness—a system of ineffable lust and cruelty. They had reason enough to shun all contact with it.

A very few words more² respecting Levitical purification will conveniently prepare the way for the consideration of the subject more immediately before us. The Jews in the time of Christ regarded the ceremonial washings of hands on various occasions as a matter of great importance.³ To this practice there are several allusions in the New Testament.⁴

Gentile child, but might do so for hire. A Jewish workman might not hire himself to prepare wine for heathen libations. Such wine was unclean, and polluted everything it touched. The least drop of it mingled with pure water rendered it impure. Kitchen utensils bought from an idolater must be purified before they were used, either by washing, or scalding, or burning, according to the material of which they were made. A roasting spit or gridiron must be purified by fire before it could be used to cook food.

¹ Deut. xiii. 17.

² 'It would require a whole volume and not a short commentary or running pen to lay open the mystery of the Pharisees concerning the washing of hands, and to discover it in all its niceties.'—Dr. John Lightfoot, *Exercitations on S. Matthew* xv. 2.

³ In order to eat unconsecrated bread the hands were to be washed up to the wrist. In order to eat consecrated food used by priests and their household, the hands had to undergo a second ablution.—De Sola, *Eighteen Treatises from the 'Mishna,'* p. 357.

⁴ 'Then there came to Jesus from Jerusalem Pharisees and Scribes, saying, Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread' (Matt. xv. 1, 2).

'And there gathered together unto Him the Pharisees, and certain of the Scribes, which had come from Jerusalem, and had seen that some of His disciples ate their bread with defiled, that is to say, unwashed hands. For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands to the wrist [πυγμῆ], eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market-place, except they wash themselves, they eat not: and many other

The germs—so to speak—of these Rabbinical laws are to be found in the Mosaic institutions, which repeatedly refer to ceremonial washings.¹ These laws were themselves copious and stringent, but they received an enormous development after the Babylonian captivity. Gradually the number and severity of the rules increased till they became almost intolerable. In the language of Christ the ordinances of the Scribes and Pharisees were 'heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne.'²

These rules were not of sudden growth. There were additions to them from age to age, and they appear to have been first reduced to an orderly system by the two great Rabbinical teachers, Hillel and Shammai, shortly before the Christian era.³

Uncleanness might be contracted by various diseases, by sexual infirmities, by the touch of a dead body, or any

things they have received to hold, washings of cups and pots and brazen vessels' (Mark vii. 1-4).

'Sacrifices that cannot as touching the conscience make the worshippers perfect, being only, with meats and drinks and divers washings, carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation' (Hebrews ix. 10).

The word *πρὸς* in the passage from S. Mark may mean either the closed fist or up to the wrist or elbow.

¹ A few examples will suffice. If blood of the sin-offering fell on a garment or earthen vessel it was to be washed (Leviticus vi. 27). After the healing of a leper he washed his clothes and his body (Leviticus xiv. 8). The remarkable ceremony of the sacrifice of the red heifer affords other instances. The sacrificing priest washed his clothes and bathed his flesh (Numbers xix. 7). He that touched a dead body was unclean seven days, and on the seventh day washed his clothes and bathed his body (Numbers xix. 19). For the man that had an issue there was a similar rule (Leviticus xv. 13). When the high-priest entered into the holy place within the veil he put on holy garments, having previously washed his flesh in water (Leviticus xvi. 4). A man who touched any unclean creeping thing or a man in his uncleanness was himself rendered unclean, 'and shall not eat of the holy things unless he wash his flesh with water' (Leviticus xxii. 6).

² Matt. xxiii. 4.

³ 'It was reserved for Hillel and Shammai, the two great rival teachers, and heroes of Jewish traditionalism immediately before Christ, to fix the Rabbinic ordinance about washing of hands.'—Edersheim, *Life of Jesus*, b. iii. c. 31. This recent and very valuable work contains a vast mass of information respecting Jewish usages at the time of Christ's ministry. Hillel was the grandfather of Gamaliel, the teacher of the Apostle Paul.—Lightfoot, *Commentary on Acts* v. 34.

article that had come in contact with a corpse, by the touch of a leper or an unclean animal, and in a multitude of other ways. Any contact with a heathen, even the touch of his dress, might involve such defilement, that on coming from market the orthodox Jew would have to immerse his body.

The terrible rigour of the Rabbinical law respecting uncleanness is shown in the punishment of unclean persons who intruded into the temple. Such persons profaned the sanctuary, and were 'guilty of death by the hand of heaven.'¹ The punishment was twofold, either whipping by the appointment of the judges or beating by the people. In the former case, forty stripes save one were inflicted by thirteen lashes of a three-lash whip; in the latter case, the people indiscriminately beat the offender with fists, sticks, or stones, and the result was frequently death. A leper that entered the 'mountain of the house' was beaten with eighty stripes; he that intruded into it when defiled by the dead or by other uncleanness, was liable either to be scourged by the public officer or to be beaten by the people. The punishment was still more severe if the man who was unclean laid his hand on the sacrifice or waved any part of it. The younger priests thrust him out of the court, and dashed out his brains with billets.²

As the temple was so sacred, a heathen proselyte could not be admitted into it without ceremonial purification. If the rigid Pharisee deemed it incumbent upon him to bathe after coming from the market-place, lest he might have contracted defilement unawares by mere contact with the garments of a Gentile, how much more necessary was it that the Gentile himself, who had frequented the worship of false gods, and lived among the abominations of idolaters, should be cleansed before he was permitted to enter the courts of the temple? Even if there were no historical evidence of such usage, it might be safely inferred from the known habits and sentiments of the Jews. The burden of proof is not on those who believe that the Jewish law required the baptism of proselytes, but on those

¹ Maimonides cited, Lightfoot's *Temple Service*, c. 1, s. 2.

² *Ib.* c. 1, s. 3.

who hold the contrary opinion. It would require overwhelming evidence to prove that the Jews would admit an idolater to their most sacred places while he remained Levitically unclean.

The connection between the purification and the baptism of proselytes is shown very clearly in the 'Mishna':—

A foreigner who is made a proselyte on the eve before the Passover may, according to the school of Shammai, immerse himself and eat his Passover in the evening. But the school of Hillel says that he who separates himself from the uncircumcision is like one who departs from a burial.¹

In order to understand these rules, it must be remembered that, according to the Levitical law, defilement by the dead lasted seven days.² According to the teaching of Hillel the proselyte might not eat of the Paschal lamb on the evening after he became a proselyte, for in leaving heathenism he was like one who had left the dead, and therefore was unclean for seven days.² The school of Shammai was less strict, and allowed the proselyte to eat the Passover the day after purification, provided that he was baptised. The references in this passage to Hillel and Shammai show that the usages here mentioned existed before the Christian era.

This passage from the 'Mishna,' the most venerable monument of Rabbinical law, shows, beyond a doubt, that before the Christian era a proselyte was regarded as ceremonially unclean, and was required to purify himself by immersion before he could participate in the most solemn rite of the Jewish religion.

Baptism was not, strictly speaking, an introductory or initiatory rite, but rather a practice preliminary to initiation. The essential ceremony by which the proselyte was admitted in the Jewish communion was circumcision. But the law respecting uncleanness rendered baptism necessary, and therefore it was practically a ceremony of initiation. The Talmud

¹ *Mishna*, Treatise 'Pesachim,' c. 8, s. 8. These rules respecting proselytes are repeated almost *verbatim* in the Treatise 'Edioth,' c. 5, s. 2.

² 'He that toucheth the dead body of a man shall be unclean seven days. This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days' (Numbers xix. 11, 14).

makes repeated references to the baptism of proselytes. There was, indeed, a difference of opinion among the Rabbins as to the absolute necessity of this rite. Thus the Rabbi Elieser held that a proselyte who was circumcised was a true proselyte even if he had not been baptised.¹ The temple at Jérusalem was still standing when this Rabbi lived, and though he held that baptism was not always necessary, the manner in which he refers to it shows that it was the general rule to baptise proselytes.

A woman might be made a complete proselyte by baptism. Young children also were baptised with their parents; but children so baptised might retract when they became adult. When the father was dead, and the mother brought the child to be baptised, the ceremony took place in the presence of three witnesses, who were 'instead of a father to him.'²

The person to be baptised undressed completely, and made a profession of his faith before three witnesses, and then immersed completely, so that every part of his body was touched by the water.³ When the baptised person stepped out of the water he was said to be 'born again.' In the language of the Rabbis he was 'a little child just born,' or 'a child of one day.'⁴

This phrase 'born again' was very common, and was applied in a variety of circumstances to persons who commenced a new career in life. The bridegroom on his marriage, the chief of the academy on his promotion, the king on his enthronement were figuratively said to be newly born.⁵

Proselytes are constantly spoken of in the Talmud as new creatures. 'If any one become a proselyte he is like a child new born.'⁶ The expression was closely applicable to the Gentile who renounced the abominations of heathenism. Con-

¹ Babylonian Gemara, *Jevamoth*, fol. 46, 2; cited Lightfoot, *Exercitationes on S. Matthew*, iii. 6.

² Lightfoot, *ubi supra*, citing the Talmud.

³ Talmud, *Chetuboth*, 11a; cited Edersheim's *Life of Jesus*, Appendix XII., where numerous references to the authorities on this subject are given.

⁴ Edersheim, *ubi supra*.

⁵ Edersheim, *Life of Jesus*, b. iii. c. 6, citing Galkut on 1 Sam. xiii.

⁶ *Jevamoth*, fol. 62, 1; 92, 1; cited by Lightfoot, *Exercitationes on S. John*, iii. 3. Edersheim (*ubi supra*) gives other references to the similar use of the phrase.

formity with the purer law of Moses was in very truth the commencement of a new life.

The phrase is used by Christ in His discourse with Nicodemus. 'Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again,¹ he cannot see the kingdom of God.' That Christ refers to baptism is obvious from His subsequent words, 'Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' Unless baptism were intended the word 'water' would be absolutely without meaning. It is also clear that the phrase 'born again' is regarded by Christ as one well known and familiar to the Rabbins; for when Nicodemus asks, 'How can these things be?' the answer is, 'Art thou a master in Israel, and understandest not these things?' That is to say, you, a learned member of the Sanhedrim, ought to know that the baptised are described as born again.

That baptism was no new rite is implied in the question which the priests and Levites put to John the Baptist: 'Why then baptisest thou, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah, neither the prophet?'² It is remarkable that the interrogators do not ask S. John why he uses the rite of baptism, but by what authority he uses it. They allow that if he had been the Christ, or Elijah, or the prophet, he would have been justified in baptising; and it is a natural inference that they did not dispute the lawfulness of the rite itself.

In the pages of Josephus, who was born about four years after the Crucifixion, we do not, it is true, find any reference to the baptism of Jewish proselytes; but neither does he refer to many other usages which prevailed undoubtedly in his days. His silence respecting them does not afford any inference one way or the other as to their existence.

The use of baptism as a religious rite and a symbol of

¹ S. John iii. 3. In the Greek the word here rendered 'again' is *ἀνωθεν*. That word has also the meaning 'from above.' We do not know the Aramaic word which Christ used; but that Nicodemus understood him to refer to being born *again* is clear from the question: 'How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?' This question would be totally irrelevant and senseless unless it were put in reply to a statement that a man must be born again.

² S. John i. 25.

purification was by no means confined to the admission of Gentile proselytes into the Jewish communion. From remote antiquity water has been regarded by various nations as a type of purity. The Essenes,¹ a very strict and ascetic Jewish sect, of whose piety Josephus speaks in terms of high praise, practised daily ceremonial bathing. When any person wished to be admitted to this sect he had to undergo a year's novitiate, 'and when,' says Josephus, 'he hath given evidence during that time that he can observe their continence, he approaches nearer to their way of living, and is made to partake of the waters of purification.'²

In the latter half of the first century there appears to have been a movement among large numbers of the Jews in favour of frequent baptism as the one purificatory rite essential to salvation.³ Among these was the sect of Hemerobaptists, or Day Baptists, who are enumerated by Hegesippus among the ancient Jewish sects contemporary with the Essenes, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees.⁴

The rites of lustration among the Greeks and Romans are but remotely connected with our subject; but they serve at least to show how widespread was the idea that water was a symbol of religious purification, and that in some instances it was an element of initiation.⁵

But it is certain that Christian baptism was not borrowed from any Gentile rite. The whole habit of Jewish thought and feeling forbids such an idea. On the other hand, the Jews, as we have seen, were familiar with ceremonial purifications under their own laws, and it may be safely concluded

¹ The origin of this sect is controverted. It was in existence 150 years before the Christian era.—Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xiii. c. 5, s. 9.

There are valuable dissertations on the history of the Essenes in Bishop Lightfoot's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians* and Edersheim's *Life of Jesus*, b. iii. c. 2.

² Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, b. ii. c. 8, s. 7.

³ Lightfoot, *Commentary on Colossians*, p. 164.

⁴ Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* b. iv. c. 21.

⁵ For example, one of the rites of initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries—the most venerable and sacred religious festival of Greece—was a solemn procession of the mystics to the sea, where they underwent purification. So in the 'Iliad' (A. 449), when the priest Chryses is about to offer a hecatomb to

that in this, as in other instances, Christ adopted an accepted and singularly appropriate usage into the ritual of the Christian religion.

The similarity between the details of Jewish and Christian baptism confirms this conclusion. For example, both Jews and Christians baptised in the presence of three witnesses, or godfathers. The Jews baptised by immersion, and this undoubtedly was the form of the Christian institution originally,¹ though subsequently baptism by affusion was allowed. Even so late as the age of Cyprian (the third century) this method, though tolerated, was not the most usual.²

Writers of the Apostolic age do not describe in detail the manner in which the sacrament was originally administered. The authors from whom we chiefly derive information on that subject are Justin Martyr and Tertullian. They wrote in the second and third centuries, but as they refer to long established usages they probably describe the practice of the first century.

One of the earliest and fullest descriptions of Christian baptism is contained in the 'Apology' of Justin Martyr, to which frequent reference has been made in these pages.

I will also relate the manner in which we dedicated ourselves to God when we were made new by Christ, lest, if we omit this, we should seem to be unfair in the explanation we are making. As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with

Apollo the sacrificers 'washed their hands and raised up the salted cakes.' Other instances of religious lustrations, or ceremonial ablutions, were those of persons polluted by sacrilege. The lustrum at Rome was a purification of the whole Roman people, performed every five years by one of the censors in the Campus Martius after the census. Lustrations of this kind were performed by sprinkling water with a branch of laurel or olive.

¹ This was clearly the mode of baptising the Ethiopian eunuch. 'They both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptised him' (Acts viii. 38).

² In Epistle lxxv. Cyprian discusses at considerable length the question whether those who are baptised on a sick bed by sprinkling are to be accounted 'legitimate Christians,' and concludes that 'the sprinkling of water preva equally with the washing of salvation' (s. 12).

fasting for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same way in which we ourselves were regenerated. For in the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ said, 'Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'¹

That this baptism was practised by immersion is clear from the statement, 'then they are brought by us where there is water,' an act which could not be necessary for baptism by affusion. It will also be observed that the rite was preceded by prayer and fasting, and is described as a new birth. From a subsequent passage² it appears that, immediately after baptism, the convert was brought to the congregation, and partook of the Eucharist.

This account was written early in the second century. The recently discovered 'Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,' written at the close of the first century or early in the second, gives directions respecting baptism, which also prescribe fasting and immersion, but allow affusion in case of necessity.

Now concerning baptism—thus baptise ye. Having first uttered all these things, baptise into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in running water. But if thou hast not running water, baptise in other water, and if thou art not able in cold, then in warm; but if thou hast not either, pour water thrice upon the head in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost. But before the baptism let the baptiser and the baptised and some others fast if they are able; but the baptised thou shalt command to fast one or two days before.³

Tertullian lays down stringent rules as to the preliminary fasting and prayer. 'Those,' says he, 'who are about to enter baptism ought to pray with repeated prayers, fasts, and

¹ Justin, *First Apology*, c. 61.

² *Ib.* c. 65.

³ Διδαχὴ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων, c. 7. The description of the two 'ways' in this 'Teaching' is so similar to that in the 'Epistle of Barnabas,' and that in the seventh book of the *Apostolical Constitutions*, that they cannot possibly be independent compositions. Many long passages are almost word for word alike in all three documents.

bendings of the knee, and vigils, all the night through, and with the confession of all bygone sins.'¹

This of course relates to adults. With regard to the infant baptism it is quite clear from Tertullian that the practice prevailed, though he himself regarded it with some disfavour. His words on this topic are remarkable:—

According to the circumstances and disposition and even the age of each individual, the delay of baptism is preferable, principally, however, in the case of little children. For why, where there is no necessity, should sponsors be thrust into danger, who both themselves, by reason of mortality, may fail to fulfil their promises, and may be disappointed by the development of an evil disposition in the infant? The Lord does indeed say, 'Forbid them not to come unto Me.' Let them come then while they are growing up, while they are learning, while they are being taught whither to come. Let them become Christians when they have become able to know Christ.²

Tertullian gives, in his treatise on Baptism, much information respecting this sacrament. It was to be administered either by the bishop or with his sanction by presbyters and deacons. Even laymen might baptise, but only in case of extreme necessity, 'when the situation of the endangered one is urgent.' But in no case were women to perform the rite.³

As to the times most suitable, he says, 'The Passover affords the most solemn day for baptism, when the Lord's Passion, in which we are baptised, was completed.' After that, 'Pentecost is a most joyous period for conferring baptisms.' Not, indeed, that the rite was necessarily confined to those two seasons. 'Every day,' he says eloquently, 'is the Lord's; every hour, every time is apt for baptism. If there is a difference in the *solemnity*, in the *grace* there is no distinction.'⁴

The presence of three sponsors was necessary. They are described as 'witnesses of our faith, whom we have as sponsors of our salvation.'⁵ The actual baptism was by trine immersion, preceded by a profession of faith in a set form.

¹ *On Baptism*, c. 20.

² *Ib.* c. 18.

³ *Ib.* c. 17.

⁴ *Ib.* c. 19.

⁵ *Ib.* c. 6.

When we are going into the water, but a little before in the presence of the congregation and under the hand of the president, we solemnly profess that we renounce the devil and his pomp and his angels. Hereupon we are thrice immersed, making a somewhat ampler pledge than the Lord has appointed in the Gospel.¹

In another place Tertullian expressly states that this confession was in a prescribed form. 'When entering the water, we make profession of the Christian in the words of the rule; we bear public testimony that we have renounced the devil, his pomp, and his angels.'²

Immediately after Baptism followed Confirmation, unction, and imposition of hands. 'When we have issued from the *lavacrum*,' says Tertullian, 'we are thoroughly anointed with a blessed unction.' This chrism or unction was, according to our author, derived from the Mosaic rite of anointing. 'In the next place,' he adds, 'the hand is laid upon us, invoking and inviting the Holy Ghost through the benediction.'³

The treatise of Tertullian, from which this brief account of baptismal ceremonies has been chiefly compiled, concludes with a beautiful passage, which may be fitly quoted here, as a specimen of the style of the most eloquent and learned of the Latin Fathers:—

Therefore, beloved friends, whom the grace of God awaits, when you ascend from that most sacred font of your new birth, and spread your hands for the first time with your brethren in the house of your mother—the church—ask from your Father, ask from the Lord that His own special graces and gifts may be supplied to you. 'Ask,' saith He, 'and ye shall receive.' Well, you have asked, and you have received; you have knocked, and it has been opened unto you. Only, I pray you, when you are asking, be mindful likewise of Tertullian the sinner.

¹ *De Corona*, c. 5.

² *De Spectaculis*, c. 4. There is a very similar passage in the Office for Baptism in the Church of England: 'Dost thou in the name of this child renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world?' &c.

³ *On Baptism*, cc. 7 and

CHAPTER XVI.

THE EUCHARIST AND THE LOVE FEAST.

THE institution of the Lord's Supper is so closely connected with the Passover that it is impossible to understand the history of the Christian rite without some knowledge of the Jewish festival.

In the first place, the controverted question¹ may be considered, whether the Last Supper was held on the night of the Passover.

The language of the first three gospels is clear on the subject; but some writers find in the fourth gospel indications that the Last Supper was not held on the night of the Passover, and consequently that the Eucharist was not instituted on that night.

With reference to this inquiry it is necessary to bear in mind the times appointed by the Mosaic law for the Passover, and also the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Passover was kept on the fourteenth day of the first month of the ecclesiastical year at evening, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread commenced the following day, and lasted seven days. This month had two names, 'Abib' and 'Nisan.' The Passover was held on the 14th Nisan, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread began on the 15th Nisan, and ended on the 21st Nisan.²

But though in strictness the Feast of Unleavened Bread

¹ In Jennings' *Jewish Antiq.* (London, 1766), b. iii. c. 4, numerous authorities on the subject of this controversy are collected.

² The rule is stated concisely in the Book of Numbers (xxviii. 16), 'In the fourteenth day of the first month is the Passover of the Lord; and in the fifteenth day of the month is the feast. Seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten.'

It must be remembered that the Jewish day began in the evening.

commenced on the day after the Passover, the whole period of *eight* days, including the day of the Passover, was frequently called the Passover, or the Feast of Unleavened Bread ; for the Passover itself was eaten with unleavened bread.¹ If this be carefully borne in mind, we shall have no difficulty in reconciling the account in the Gospel of S. John with that given by the other evangelists.

The language of the first three gospels is so clear that we are forced to conclude that if the Lord's Supper was not eaten on the night of the Passover, all three evangelists have mistaken the time when it was eaten.

S. Matthew relates circumstantially the preparation for the Passover, and the subsequent eating it :—

On the first day of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt Thou that we make ready the *Passover* ? And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand ; I keep the *Passover* at thy house with My disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus appointed them ; and they made ready the *Passover*.²

S. Mark is equally explicit :—

And on the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the *Passover*, His disciples say unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we go and make ready that Thou mayest eat the *Passover* ? And He sendeth two of His disciples, and saith unto them, Go into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water : follow him. And whersoever he shall enter in, say to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the *Passover* with My disciples ? And he will himself show you a large upper room

¹ There are ample proofs that in common parlance the whole period of *eight* days was called the Passover, or Feast of Unleavened Bread. Thus in S. Matthew (xxvi. 17), it is said that on 'the first day of unleavened bread' the disciples prepared the Passover. S. Mark (xiv. 12) speaks of 'the first day of the week, when they sacrificed the Passover.' In the following passage Josephus distinctly calls the whole period of *eight* days the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Referring to the departure of the Hebrews from Egypt he says, 'In memory of the want we were then in we keep a feast of eight days, which is called the Feast of Unleavened Bread.'—(*Antiq.* b. ii. c. 15, s. 1). There are numerous passages in Josephus in which the Feast of Unleavened Bread is called the Passover.

² S. Matt. xxvi. 17-19.

furnished and ready : and there make ready for us. And the disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as He had said unto them : and they made ready the *Passover*.¹

S. Luke describes the incident in nearly the same words, the only material variation being that he supplies the names of the two disciples who were commissioned to prepare the *Passover* :—

And the day of unleavened bread came on, when the *Passover* must be sacrificed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and make ready the *Passover*, that we may eat. And they said, Where wilt Thou that we make ready ? And He said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water ; follow him into the house whereinto he goeth. And ye shall say to the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the *Passover* with My disciples ? And he will show you a large upper room furnished : there make ready. And they went, and found as He had said unto them : and they made ready the *Passover*. And when the hour was come, He sat down,² and the apostles with Him. And He said unto them, With desire have I desired to eat this *Passover* with you before I suffer.³

With these passages before us it is not too much to affirm that unless the three evangelists have made a mistake, the Last Supper was eaten on the night of the *Passover*. Is it credible that narrating the most momentous events of Christianity, they would call that the *Passover* which was not the *Passover* ?

Let us now turn to the narrative of S. John, and see if there be really any discrepancy between him and the other evangelists. S. John prefaces the account of the Last Supper with this solemn exordium :—

Now before the Feast of the *Passover*, Jesus, knowing that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And supper being

¹ S. Mark xiv. 12-16.

² ἀνέπεσε = reclined.

³ S. Luke xxii. 7-15.

ready,¹ the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came forth from God, and goeth to God; He riseth from the supper, and laid aside His garments; and He took a towel, and girded Himself. Then He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet.²

It has been sometimes inferred from this passage that the Last Supper was before the Passover. But the words will not support the inference. It is true that S. John uses the words 'before the Feast of the Passover,' but with reference to what? Clearly to Christ's knowledge that 'His hour was come.' All that S. John says on the point amounts to this, that Christ foresaw His betrayal before He sat down to supper.

The next passage, from which it has been argued that S. John places the Last Supper before the Passover, is as follows:—

So when He had dipped the sop, He taketh and giveth it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. And after the sop then Satan entered into him. Jesus therefore saith unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent He spake this unto him: for some thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus said unto him, Buy what things we have need of for the feast; or that he should give something to the poor. He then having received the sop, went out straightway: and it was night.³

This passage has been interpreted to mean that during the Last Supper Christ bade Judas go out and buy quickly something that was needed for the Paschal Feast, which was to take place on a subsequent day. But this is a very strained

¹ There is here in the Authorised Version a serious mistranslation, which obscures the whole narrative. The Greek words *δείπνου γενομένου* do not mean 'supper being ended,' but 'supper being ready.' It is quite clear from a subsequent part of the narrative that Jesus did not wash the disciples' feet after supper; for after the washing Judas received the sop, and the sop, according to the established usage, was eaten during the earlier part of the feast.' Another reading is *δείπνου γινομένου* = 'during supper.'

² S. John xiii. 1-5.

³ S. John xiii. 26-30. The sop, as S. Matthew's narrative shows, was eaten in the earlier part of the feast.

interpretation. It is far more simple and natural to suppose that the 'feast' here mentioned was the feast then actually going on. The ritual of the Passover, as we shall see hereafter, was elaborate and strictly regulated, and various condiments and articles of food were required for it. The disciples might well suppose that some of those had been omitted, and that Judas was directed to supply the omission forthwith. Why should he be bidden during a supper then actually commenced to go out *quickly* to provide articles for another subsequent feast?

It is sometimes inferred from the following passage in S. John's Gospel that the Crucifixion took place on the morning preceding the Paschal Supper :—

They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the palace : and it was early ; and they themselves entered not into the palace, that they might not be defiled ; but might eat the Passover.¹

If the 'Passover' here mentioned were the Paschal Supper, it must be conceded that the Last Supper of Christ and His disciples, which was eaten the previous day, could not have been the Paschal Supper.

But the 'Passover' here mentioned cannot possibly be the Paschal Supper ; for the uncleanness caused by entering the prætorium of Pilate would cease at evening ; and as that supper was not eaten until after dark, there could be nothing to prevent the Jews from eating it.

To what, then, are we to refer the 'Passover' mentioned in this passage ?

Bearing in mind that the word includes the whole period of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we may naturally refer it to the commencement of that feast on the fifteenth Nisan (the day after the Paschal Supper), as mentioned in the Book of Numbers :—

And on the fifteenth day of this month shall be a feast : seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. In the first day

¹ S. John xviii. 28.

shall be an holy convocation ; ye shall do no servile work⁵ ; but ye shall offer an offering made by fire a burnt-offering unto the Lord.¹

This feast, unlike the Paschal Supper, was eaten in the middle of the day, and it was necessary that those who partook of it, as of all other Jewish feasts, should be Levitically clean. Consequently, if the Jews had entered into the prætorium of the Roman Governor in the morning, they would have been precluded from eating this festive meal. We thus see that the passage of S. John just quoted is referred easily and naturally to the day after the Paschal Supper, and is inapplicable to the day preceding that supper.

The only other passage in S. John's Gospel which creates any difficulty is the following :—

When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on a judgment seat at a place called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the preparation of the Passover.²

The words 'it was the preparation of the Passover' might suggest to readers ignorant of Jewish customs that Christ was brought before Pilate previously to the Passover.

¹ Numbers xxviii. 17-19. Josephus notices this feast of the 15th Nisan. 'The Feast of Unleavened Bread falls on the fifteenth day of the month, and continues seven days, wherein they feed on unleavened bread ; on every one of which days two bulls are killed and one ram and seven lambs.'—*Antiq.* b. iii. c. 10, s. 5.

² S. John xix. 13. Dr. John Lightfoot has discussed this subject very fully in his *Horæ Hebraicæ*, 'Exercitationes upon S. Matthew,' c. 26. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that Christ's Last Supper was the Passover, but contends that the supper mentioned in the Gospel of S. John, c. 13, was not that feast, but the feast held in Bethany six days before the Passover.

The arguments against this theory seem irresistible. At the feast recorded in the supper of the 13th chapter of S. John incidents occurred which the other gospels say occurred at the Last Supper. In the 13th chapter of S. John (ver. 26) Jesus gives the sop to Judas ; so also at the Last Supper (S. Matthew xxvi. 23 and S. Mark xiv. 20). Again, in the 13th chapter of S. John (ver. 38) Jesus warns Peter that before cock-crow he will deny Him. The same incident is recorded with reference to the Last Supper by the other three evangelists. Incidents such as these could not occur more than once ; and, therefore, they clearly identify the supper mentioned by S. John, c. 13, with the Last Supper of the other Gospels.

But the difficulty vanishes if we remember, firstly, that the word Passover is used to signify the whole period of eight days from the Paschal Supper until the end of the Feast of Unleavened Bread; and secondly, that the word rendered 'preparation' constantly denotes the Friday, which was called by the Rabbis the eve of the Sabbath. On that day victuals were made ready for the Sabbath, judges might not sit in judgment in capital cases, and various kinds of labour were prohibited.

The 'Mishna,' in the treatise on the Sabbath, gives minute regulations for the preparation of the Sabbath. For example, as a fire might not be kindled on the Sabbath, it is provided that food may be placed in an oven on the previous day. But there was no such an institution as a day of preparation for the Passover.

The words translated 'the preparation of the Passover' simply mean the Friday in the Paschal¹ week. That this is their meaning appears conclusively from a subsequent verse of the chapter in which the words occur.

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for the day of that Sabbath was an high day), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.²

Supposing the Last Supper to have been eaten on the night of the Passover (the 14th Nisan), the Crucifixion took place the next day—the first of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (the 15th Nisan). The Sabbath day following (the 16th Nisan) was a high day, for it was the day on which the sheaf of the first-fruits was 'waved,' or offered in the temple.³

¹ S. Mark expressly states that this is the meaning of the word 'preparation.' 'It was the "preparation," that is, the day before the Sabbath' (S. Mark xv. 42). Josephus (*Antiq.* xvi. c. 6, s. 2) gives a decree of Cæsar Augustus, in which he directs, among other things, that Jews shall 'not be obliged to go before any judge on the Sabbath day, nor on the day of preparation after the ninth hour.'

² S. John xix. 31.

³ 'On the second day of unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth day of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth; for before that day they do not touch them. And as they suppose it proper to honour God from whom they obtain this plentiful provision, in the first place they offer the first-fruits of their barley.'—Josephus, *Antiq.* b. iii. c. 10, s. 5.

We have hitherto confined our attention to Scriptural arguments for the coincidence of the Lord's Supper with the Passover. But the *à priori* arguments are also very strong. Christ's life had been passed in strict conformity with the Mosaic law.¹ He was circumcised at the prescribed season. He religiously attended at the solemn festivals at Jerusalem. He observed the Sabbath—not indeed with the Pharisaic strictness, but according to the original institution. He was diligent in worship in the temple and synagogue, and sternly rebuked the profanation of the temple. His bitter enemies in his last trial did not allege against Him that He violated the ancient law. And yet if we do not believe that the Last Supper was held at the time of the Passover, we are forced to conclude that Christ kept a kind of mock Passover without any assigned or assignable reason.

Again, the testimony of ancient Christian writers is uniform as to the institution of the Last Supper on the night of the Passover. We shall search in vain in the pages of the early Fathers for a doubt on this point.²

¹ Dr. Lightfoot (Bishop of Durham), in his admirable edition of the *Epistle to the Colossians*, p. 174, speaks of Christ's conformity with the ceremonial law. 'Certainly He could not have regarded the temple as unholy, for His whole time during His sojourns at Jerusalem was spent within its precincts. It was the scene of His miracles, of His ministrations, of His daily teaching. And in like manner it is the common rendezvous of His disciples after Him. Nor, again, does He evince any abhorrence of the sacrifices. On the contrary, He says that the altar consecrates the gifts: He charges the cleansed lepers to go and fulfil the Mosaic ordinance, and offer the sacrificial offerings to the priests. And His practice also is conformable to His teaching. He comes to Jerusalem regularly to attend the great festivals, where sacrifices formed the most striking part of the ceremonial, and He Himself enjoins preparation to be made for the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb.'

² Eusebius, in his narrative of the controversy about Easter, says that the Asiatic Churches 'supposed that they ought to keep the fourteenth day of the month for the festival of the Passover, in which day the Jews were commanded to kill the Paschal lamb,' and he quotes letters, then extant, of Irenæus and Polycrates, which state that this practice has existed from the time of the apostles.—*Eccles. Hist.* cc. 23, 24.

Tertullian, writing towards the end of the second century, calls Easter the Passover, and refers to the celebration by Christ of His last Passover. 'The Passover,' says Tertullian, 'affords a solemn day for baptism, when the Lord's

We now proceed to describe some of the rites of the Passover Feast. It was always held on the fourteenth day of the month Abib (or Nisan, as it was otherwise called); it was celebrated at Jerusalem only, and the Passover was slain at sunset.

Thou mayest not sacrifice the Passover within any of the gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee; but at the place which the Lord thy God chooseth to place His name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the Passover at even at the going down of the sun.¹

The people prepared themselves for the Passover by fasting. Philo Judæus, a learned Jewish contemporary of Christ, says:—

The day of fasting, on which abstinence from all meats is enjoined, is called by the Hebrews in their native language *Pascha*, on which the whole nation sacrifices, each individual among them not waiting for priests; since on this occasion the law has given for one especial day in every year a priesthood to the whole nation, so that each private individual slays his own victim on that day.²

This preparatory fast commenced early in the afternoon preceding the Passover. 'On the eve of the Passover,' says the Talmud, 'a man may not eat from near the time of the evening sacrifice [Minchah] until after dark.'³ The phrase 'near the time of the Minchah' is interpreted to mean half an hour previous to it, and as the evening sacrifice was slain on the day before the Passover half an hour after the seventh hour, the fast must have commenced about the seventh hour, or 1 P.M. The reason assigned by the commentators for this fast is, that 'they might eat the unleavened bread which was commanded with an appetite for the honour of the command.'

Passion, in which we are baptised, was completed. Nor will it be incongruous to interpret figuratively the fact that when the Lord was about to celebrate the last Passover He said to the disciples who were sent to make preparation, 'Ye will meet a man bearing water.'—*On Baptism*, c. 19.

¹ Deut. xvi. 5.

² Philo Judæus on *The Ten Commandments*, c. 30.

³ *Mishna*, Treatise 'Pesachim,' c. 10, s. 1.

Persons of health and strength were to eat very little meat all day; and many fasted the whole day.¹

The ceremonies of the Passover are minutely described in the 'Mishna.' These ceremonies were of two kinds—*public* in the temple, and *domestic* in the houses where the Passover was eaten.²

I. *Ceremonies in the Temple*.—The killing of the Passover was strictly regulated. Every one of the companies about to be mentioned sent their lamb by one of their number to be slain in the temple. The time for slaying the lambs was from the ninth hour to the eleventh³ (3 P.M. to 5 P.M.). As soon as the court of the temple was filled with persons who thus brought their lambs, the doors were locked, the trumpets sounded, and the lambs slain and flayed. During this period the Hallel, or Hymn or Service of Song, consisting of six of the Psalms (cxiii.—cxviii. inclusive), was sung by the Levites, and the people responded. This selection of Psalms is remarkably appropriate, for they are all songs of jubilant thanksgiving, and contain frequent allusions to the deliverance of the Israelites from their enemies.⁴ At the end of every passage sung by the Levites, the people responded Hallelujah, so that this response, Hallelujah, was repeated a hundred and twenty-three times.⁵

¹ Lightfoot, *Temple Service*, c. 13. On the day preceding the Passover the sacrifice was slain exceptionally early; Dr. Edersheim (*Temple and its Ministry*, c. 7) says at 12.30 P.M. But Sola (*Eighteen Treatises from the 'Mishna,' Treatise Pesachim*, c. 5) gives the time as 1.30 P.M. Lightfoot also, in his *Temple Service*, c. 12, s. 3, gives the time as 1.30 P.M.

² The account in the text of the Paschal ceremonies is for the most part abridged from Dr. Lightfoot's *Temple Service* and the *Treatise on the Passover in the 'Mishna,'* edited by Surenhusius, vol. i. p. 134.

³ *Ib.* It appears from the *Mishna* (*De Paschate*, c. 8, s. 7) that even a hundred men might eat the Passover together if the flesh were sufficient for each of them to eat a piece of the size of an olive.

⁴ These psalms in our Prayer Book version commence as follows: Ps. cxiii.: 'Praise ye the Lord, ye servants;' Ps. cxiv.: 'When Israel came out of Egypt;' Ps. cxv.: 'Not unto us, O Lord;' Ps. cxvi.: 'I am well pleased that the Lord hath heard the voice of my prayer;' Ps. cxvii.: 'O praise the Lord;' Ps. cxviii.: 'O give thanks unto the Lord.'

⁵ For example:—

Levites. Praise ye the Lord.

People. Hallelujah.

After the lambs had been slain and flayed, the first company of men who brought them went out, and a second company came in and filled the court again. The process was repeated with these. Again the trumpets sounded, the victims were slain and flayed, and the Hallel sung by the priests, the people responding as before. A third time the great court was filled, a third congregation of sacrificers slew their lambs, a third time the choral song of praise and thanksgiving resounded through the temple. Then the public service was completed. The temple was cleansed, the incense burned, and the lamps lit, which burned on the sacred candlesticks from evening until morn.

It must have been a strange and solemn scene. Crowds of faithful worshippers had come up to Jerusalem, not from Judæa only, but from all the widely scattered settlements of Jews throughout the vast Roman empire. From Babylonia on the east to Alexandria and Italy on the west multitudes of pilgrims had made the long, toilsome, and dangerous journey to celebrate the deliverance of their fathers, many ages before, from Egyptian bondage. The myriads crowding into the magnificent temple with their victims, the robed priests sounding their trumpets, the Levites singing the Hallel, and the people responding in loud antiphony—all this exhibited a spectacle wonderfully impressive.

II. *Domestic Ceremonies.*—Far different was the domestic ceremonial of the sacred feast eaten by the Jewish household at nightfall, each in the privacy of its own chamber, with solemn prayers and religious discourse.

The Paschal societies or companies which were to eat each Paschal lamb were arranged beforehand. The Passover was to be slain for an agreed number of persons. This rule was

Levites. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord.

People. Hallelujah.

Levites. Praise the name of the Lord.

People. Hallelujah.

The Book of Revelation abounds in liturgical allusions. The following passage is frequently supposed to refer to the Hallel: 'And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah, for our Lord God the Almighty reigneth' 'Rev. xix. 6.'

founded on the command in the Book of Exodus, 'Every man according to his eating, ye shall make your count for the lamb.' Josephus, who was learned in the customs of the Jews, says, 'that a company not less than ten belong to every sacrifice' (for it is not lawful for them to feast singly by themselves, and many of us are twenty in a company).¹

The Paschal lamb was cooked whole and unbroken. The Mosaic law strictly prohibited the breaking of the bones;² accordingly, it was either roasted in an oven or on a spit, which pierced it without injury to the bones.³

Four cups of wine mingled with water were drunk at this feast. The rule in this respect was so strict that the poorest man in Israel was bound to drink of the four cups that night, even though he were a pauper dependent on the public alms, and if he could not procure the wine otherwise, or obtain from the almoners enough for four cups, he must sell or pawn his coat, or hire himself out to obtain means of purchasing the wine.

The wine was mingled with water. The 'Mishna,' in the treatise on the Passover, constantly refers to this mingling of the wine with water. The wine was thick, and became more palatable by being diluted. It was a current maxim that, 'whosoever drank these four cups of pure wine had done his duty about drinking wine, but had not done his duty about setting forth their freedom,' for the mingling of the wine was not so much for the sake of sobriety, as to render it more pleasant to the taste.

The drinking of the four cups was accompanied by religious ceremonies, which marked successive stages of the feast.

The *first cup* was drunk at the commencement of the supper. The head of the company took the cup in his hands, and pronounced over it this beautiful grace.

Blessed art Thou, Jehovah our God, King of the Universe,

¹ *Wars of the Jews*, b. vi. c. 9, s. 3.

² Exodus xii. 46.

³ 'Mishna,' Treatise 'Pesachim,' c. 7, ss. 1 and 2. At the Greek symposia and the Roman cœnæ the wine was mingled with water in a large bowl (crater), from which the cups were filled. The strength of the beverage was regulated by one of the party—the symposiarch of the Greeks and the *arbitrator bibendi* of the Romans.

who hast chosen us from among all people, and exalted us from among all languages, and sanctified us with Thy commandments. And Thou hast given us, O Jehovah our God, in love, the solemn days for joy and the festivals, and appointed seasons for gladness; and this day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the season of our freedom, a holy convocation, the memorial of our departure out of Egypt. For Thou hast chosen us and sanctified us from among all nations, and Thy holy festivals with joy hast Thou caused us to inherit. Blessed art Thou, Jehovah, King of the Universe, who hast preserved us alive and brought us to this season.¹

Then the first cup was drunk, and each of the company dipped his closed hands into water,² and the head of the company pronounced this blessing:—

Blessed art Thou, Jehovah our God, who hast sanctified us with Thy commandments, and hast enjoined us concerning the washing of hands.

Bitter herbs were next set on the table. The president dipped some lettuce into salt water and partook of it, and gave some to the others. This was in compliance with the command, 'They shall eat the flesh in that night roast with fire and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it' (Exodus xii. 8).

After that unleavened cakes were placed on the table, and charoseth, a sauce compounded of dates, raisins, and other fruits with vinegar. The president pronounced this blessing, 'Blessed be He that created the fruit of the earth,' and he took the herbs and dipped them into the sauce charoseth, and each of the company ate a portion.

The *second cup* was mingled at this period of the feast. And, says the 'Mishna,' the son shall inquire of the father the cause of these ceremonies, and the father shall instruct him according to his ability. He thereupon narrates the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt.

The instruction of children as to the meaning of the rite was prescribed at the first institution of the Passover.

¹ Edersheim, *The Temple: its Ministry and Services*, chap. xii.

² This practice of washing with the fist closed (or up to the wrist or elbow) has been noticed in the last chapter.

And it shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.¹

After this instruction, which was called the *Haggadah*, or 'shewing forth,' the president takes up the unleavened bread in his hands and says—

We eat this unleavened bread because our fathers had not time to sprinkle their meal to be leavened before God revealed Himself and redeemed them.²

Then follows a prayer, of which the very words are preserved in the 'Mishna':—

We are therefore in duty bound to thank, praise, adore, glorify, extol, honour, bless, exalt, and reverence Him who wrought all these miracles for our ancestors and us. For He brought us forth from bondage to freedom; He changed our sorrow into joy, our mourning into a feast; He led us from darkness into a great light. Let us therefore say in His presence the Hallelujah.³

Thereupon the first part of the Hallel was sung:—

Psalm cxiii.: Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord. Praise the name of the Lord.

Psalm cxiv.: When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of a strange language.

After that followed this benediction of redemption:—

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who hast redeemed us and our ancestors from Egypt.⁴

Then the second cup was drunk.

Next in order was the important ceremony of breaking the bread. The president took the two loaves, and breaking

¹ Exodus xii. 26, 27

² Lightfoot, *Exercitationes on S. Matthew*, xxvi. 26.

³ *Mishna*, *De Paschale*, c. 10, s. 5.

⁴ *Mishna*, *ubi supra*, s. 6.

one laid the pieces on the other, which was whole, and blessed it, saying,

Blessed be He who causeth bread to grow from the earth.

And putting some bread and bitter herbs together, he dipped them into the sauce charoseth, saying :—

Blessed be Thou, O Lord God, our Eternal King, He who hath sanctified us by His precepts, and hath commanded us to eat.¹

Then commenced the eating of the Paschal lamb, which concluded the meal. The body of this lamb was set upon the table roasted whole. After the Paschal lamb nothing else was to be eaten.²

The *third cup* was mingled when the Paschal lamb had been eaten. This third cup was called the cup of blessing, because it was followed by the blessing or grace after meat, as terminating the meal.

The *fourth cup* followed. It was called the cup of the Hallel, because immediately after it the remainder of the Hallel was sung. It has been already stated that the first part of the Hallel (Psalms cxiii. and cxiv.) was sung immediately before the second cup was drunk. Now at the end of the whole feast, when the fourth and last cup had been drunk, the company sang the remainder of the Hallel, viz. :—

Psalm cxv. : Not unto us, O Lord ; not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory.

Psalm cxvi. : I love the Lord, because He has heard my voice.

Psalm cxvii. : O praise the Lord, all ye nations.

Psalm cxviii. : O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good.

The Hallel having been sung, the whole ceremony concluded with these two beautiful benedictions :—

¹ Lightfoot, *ubi supra*.

² It is unlawful to conclude the eating of the Passover with a dessert.—*Mishna, De Paschate*, c. 10, s. 8. Some of the commentators explain this to mean that fruits and dainties are not to be eaten, which would take the taste of the Passover out of the mouth.—Surrenhusius, *Mishna*, loc. cit.

O Lord our God, Let all Thy works praise Thee, and Thy saints, and the righteous ones that do Thy will, and Thy people, the house of Israel, all of them shouting. Let them praise, and bless, and magnify, and glorify, and sing out the name of Thy glory with honour and renown for remembrance of Thy kingdom. For it is good to praise Thee, and it is lovely to sing unto Thy name. For ever and ever Thou art God. Blessed be Thou, O Lord our King, who art to be lauded with praises. *Amen.*

Let the soul of all living bless Thy name, O Lord our God, and the spirit of all flesh glorify and exalt Thy memorial for ever, O our King. For ever Thou art God, and besides Thee we have no King, Redeemer, or Saviour.¹

Such were the principal rites of the Paschal supper. The solemnity and significance of the whole service from beginning to end are very remarkable. The Jews had been taught that this night was to be 'much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt,' and surely a ritual was never contrived which more fully and effectively answered this purpose. The materials of which the feast was composed, the manner in which they were eaten and drunk, and above all, the solemn and expressive prayers and blessings and psalms by which they were accompanied, all served to the same end—to commemorate the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and to testify the gratitude of the people to God for their deliverance. The Liturgy of the Passover is one of the noblest monuments of Jewish piety.

We proceed now to compare this account of the Passover with the accounts given in the Gospels of Christ's Last Supper.

S. Matthew thus describes the commencement of the feast:—

Now when even was come, He reclined² with the twelve disciples; and as they were eating, He said, Verily I say unto

¹ Lightfoot, *Temple Service*, c. 13.

² ἀνέκειτο μετὰ τῶν δώδεκα μαθητῶν. The translation in the Authorised Version 'He was sitting at meat' is misleading. There is no word corresponding to 'meat' in the Greek.

you, that one of you shall betray Me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto Him every one, Is it I, Lord? And He answered, He that dipped¹ his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of Man goeth even as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man through-whom the Son of Man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born. And Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Is it I, Rabbi? He saith unto him, Thou hast said.

This closely agrees with S. Mark's Gospel. The Gospel of S. John describes much more fully the incident of Judas receiving the sop from Christ.

The dish mentioned in this passage was undoubtedly that which contained the sauce charoseth, already described, and into which the Jews, as we have seen, were accustomed to dip the bitter herbs at the Paschal feast. There is no trace of any such usage except at that feast, and therefore we must refer to this rite the dipping of the 'sop' or (more correctly) 'morsel' mentioned in the Gospel of S. John.²

It has been stated that this ceremony was immediately followed by the drinking of the *second cup* of wine, and that again was followed by the breaking of the bread. This order of events agrees with S. Luke's narrative:—

And He received a cup, and when He had given thanks, He said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come. And He took bread, and having given thanks, He brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is My body, which is given for you; this do, in remembrance of Me.

It has been stated that after the supper was eaten a third and fourth cup were drunk. This accords with S. Luke's narrative, which proceeds thus:—

And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood, even that which is poured out for you.

¹ Not 'dippeth,' as in the Authorised Version.

² The Greek word is ψάμιον, which means a mouthful or morsel—not a sop, which is something steeped or soaked.

In the accounts of the Last Supper given in the four gospels there is a substantial but not an exact verbal agreement. Each evangelist mentions some particulars omitted by others. Also many of the ceremonies of the Passover are passed over in silence by all of them. The reason of this silence is obvious. Their object is to describe not the well-known rites of that solemnity, but the special circumstances of the institution of the Eucharist.

But so far as they do refer to Paschal ceremonies their narratives accord with the order and character of those ceremonies. For example, though four cups are not expressly mentioned, one is stated by S. Luke to have been drunk before the breaking of the bread, and another to have been drunk after the whole feast was concluded.¹

The Eucharistic bread was broken after the second cup had been drunk and before any meat was eaten. The fast we have seen commenced early in the afternoon, and afterwards nothing was eaten except the morsel of bitter herbs before the broken bread. The Paschal lamb was eaten, as we have stated, after the second cup had been drunk. The third cup followed the eating of the Paschal lamb. This apparently was the Eucharistic cup; for S. Luke and S. Paul expressly say that it was drunk after supper, that is, after the lamb was eaten, and S. Paul calls it the 'cup of blessing,' the very name which, by Jewish usage, was given to the third cup.²

The conclusion of the Paschal ceremony was the singing

¹ Dr. John Lightfoot (*Temple Service*, c. 13, s. 7) suggests that the Eucharistic bread was broken after the supper was concluded. He founds this opinion on the words *κλάσας εὐλόγησε*, which he translates, 'He first brake and then gave thanks.' Therefore, argues Dr. Lightfoot, that breaking of bread was not the one prescribed by the rites of the Passover; for according to those rites the bread must be first broken and then blessed. But there is an obvious answer to this minute verbal criticism. The Greek words might well be translated 'as He broke, He blessed.' They do not imply necessarily a sequence of blessing after breaking. The theory that Christ broke bread twice is liable to insuperable objections. There is not a word about a second breaking of bread in either gospel. The whole tenor of the narrative shows a scrupulous adherence to Jewish custom. Besides, SS. Mathew and Mark distinctly say that the Eucharistic bread was broken 'while they were eating;' therefore it could not have been broken after the supper was over.

² Luke xxii. 20; 1 Cor. xii. 26; x. 16.

the second part of the Hallel. S. Mark says, 'And when they had sung a hymn [literally, having hymned¹] they went out unto the Mount of Olives.' This service of song was undoubtedly the second part of the Hallel.

Such, then, was the solemn rite instituted by Christ on the night before His death. The disciples were commanded to continue this rite. 'This do, in remembrance of Me,' or, as it may well be rendered, 'This do, to bring Me to mind.'²

And it is clear that the first Christians understood the commandment to mean that they were to celebrate the Eucharist frequently; for we are told 'that they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread and the prayers;' and again, that 'day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart.'³

The phrase which in these two passages is rendered 'continued steadfastly' means they were persevering or diligent.⁴ They daily attended the temple like other Jews. The original Greek does not necessarily mean that they also broke bread daily, but it shows undoubtedly that they broke it frequently, for we are told that they persevered and were diligent 'in breaking the bread and the prayers.'⁵

The earliest celebrations probably took place in that upper chamber, in which Christ had eaten the Last Supper with His apostles. S. Luke states in his Gospel that the supper was eaten in a 'large upper room furnished,' and in the Acts he says the disciples assembled in '*the* upper room.' The Book of the Acts of the Apostles is, as he himself states, a continuation of his Gospel, and it is therefore reasonable to suppose that when he speaks in the Acts of *the* upper chamber he is referring to the chamber already mentioned in his Gospel.

The account given by S. Luke of the celebration of the

¹ ὑμνήσαντες. Mark xiv. 26.

² τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν, 1 Cor. xi. 24.

³ Acts ii. 42 and 46.

⁴ ἦσαν δὲ προσκαρτεροῦντες.

⁵ 'In the breaking of *the* bread and the prayers,' not 'in breaking of bread and in prayers,' as in the Authorised Version.

Eucharist by St. Paul at Troas affords valuable information as to the mode in which the rite was performed in Apostolic times.

The breaking of the bread at Troas took place after midnight, and before break of day. 'Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow, and prolonged his speech until midnight.' . . . 'Paul discoursed yet longer.' . . . 'And when he was gone up and had broken the bread and had eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.'¹

There is nothing whatever in this narrative to indicate that the breaking of the bread was in any way hindered or delayed by the incident of the fall of Eutychus from the window of the upper chamber where the disciples were assembled. On the contrary, we are told that S. Paul discoursed with them, 'intending to depart on the morrow,' that is, they had arranged to keep vigil, and to spend the whole night in religious exercises. And after Eutychus was taken up, S. Paul did not immediately proceed to the conclusion of these services, for he subsequently 'talked with them a long while, even till break of day,' and then departed for Assos, as he had previously arranged to do.²

It will be observed that the bread was broken while the disciples were fasting. Not until after this was eaten did they partake of the first meal of the day. 'And when He was gone up and had broken the bread and had eaten, He talked with them.' The breaking the bread and the eating here mentioned are two distinct things. The Greek word here translated 'had eaten,' signifies eating a meal, and is never applied to participation in the Eucharist.³

The rule of fasting before communion was no new thing. That rule, as we have seen, was strictly observed with reference to the Passover, and it was natural to continue in celebrating the Eucharist, which was instituted at the Passover.

The only instances which we can find of the Eucharist being taken by early Christians after a meal are those to

¹ Acts xx. 7, *et seq.*

² *Ib.*

³ ἀναβὰς δὲ καὶ κλάσας τὸν ἄρτον καὶ γευσάμενος.

which S. Paul refers in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, where he severely condemns this practice. 'What? have ye not houses to eat and drink in?' he asks. 'If any man is hungry let him eat at home.'¹ The practices of the Corinthian Church were so irregular and exceptional that no inference can be drawn from them with reference to other Christian communities. The meaning of many of the expressions which occur in this chapter is obscure, but this is perfectly clear, that the apostle condemns the association of the Eucharist with a common meal. He declares that the ecclesia or assembly is not the proper place for eating and drinking—he bids them eat at home.²

There are one or two other passages in the New Testament which are supposed by some commentators to relate to the Eucharist, but they do not furnish any additional information as to the manner in which that rite was performed. We proceed therefore to notice some passages in early Christian writings which refer to this subject.

The oldest Liturgy extant is that contained in the eighth book of the 'Apostolical Constitutions,' which apparently has come down to us almost unaltered. In one place³ there is a prayer for S. James, S. Clement, and others, that God 'may grant them to continue in His churches in health, honour, and long life.' There is not the slightest reason to doubt the genuineness of this passage, which shows that it was written during the lives of S. James and S. Clement. The Liturgy to which it belongs is the Service for the Ordination of a Bishop. It directs that he shall be placed early⁴ in the morning in his throne in a place set apart for him, and that the Eucharist shall be celebrated.

There are not many references in ancient Christian writers to the celebration of the Eucharist in the first century, but

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 22, 34.

² It is by no means certain that the 'supper' to which S. Paul refers was an evening meal. The same word (δῆπνον) is used in S. Luke xiv. to denote a meal which could not possibly have been eaten after dark, for one person invited excused himself because he was going out to see a field, and another because he was going to try five yoke of oxen.

³ *Apost. Cons.* b. viii. c. 10.

⁴ *Ib.* b. viii. c. 5.

there is enough to show that the sacrament was from the first regarded with the utmost solemnity, and that the time and manner of administering it were strictly regulated. Ignatius, who certainly was a contemporary of some of the apostles, says, 'Take ye heed then to have but one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one cup to show forth the unity of His blood; one altar, as there is one bishop,'¹ and again, 'let that be deemed a valid Eucharist which is administered either by the bishop or by one to whom he has entrusted it.'² Referring to heretics he says, 'They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father of His goodness raised up again.'³

The ordinary usage, as appears from these passages, was that the Eucharist should be administered by each bishop or presbyter in his own church. But to this rule there was an exception, which illustrates in a very interesting manner the harmony which subsisted between the churches. When one bishop visited another in his diocese, it was a graceful and courteous usage to assign to the visitor the office of celebrant. This practice is recorded with reference to Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John. When Polycarp visited Rome to confer with Anicetus, Bishop of Rome, on matters of Church discipline, 'they communed with each other, and in the Church Anicetus yielded to Polycarp, from motives of respect, the office of consecrating, and they separated from each other in peace, all the church being at peace.'⁴

The celebrated letter⁵ from Pliny to Trajan—written very early in the second century—gives some remarkable information respecting Christians in Bithynia. Pliny states in this letter that he was informed by certain apostate Christians whom he interrogated, that 'they were accustomed to assemble on an appointed day before light and to sing, respond-

¹ *Ignatius to the Philadelphians*, c. 4.

² *To the Smyrneans*, c. 8.

³ Eusebius, *Ecl. Hist.* b. v. c. 24.

⁴ *Ib.* c. 7.

⁵ See *ante*, chap. xi.

ing to each other, a hymn to Christ as a God, and to bind themselves by a 'sacrament,'¹ not for any criminal purpose, but that they would not commit theft, robbery, adultery, or breach of trust.' The word 'sacrament' here must mean the Eucharist, for there is no other known practice or observance of the Christians to which it can be applied. We have abundant evidence that they assembled to celebrate the Eucharist, but there is not the slightest trace of any practice of taking an oath not to commit crimes, and it would therefore be absurd to infer from Pliny's use of the elastic word *sacramentum* that any such practice existed.

By a similar argument it may be concluded that the appointed day on which, according to Pliny, the Christians assembled, was Sunday. We know that they used to meet on that day; we do not hear of any other to which the phrase 'appointed day' would be applicable. Therefore it is a legitimate inference that Sunday is the day here meant, and that the Eucharist was celebrated before dawn on that day.

The fullest account of the primitive celebration of this sacrament is contained in some remarkable passages in the 'First Apology' of Justin Martyr, which are so important that they must be quoted fully. This writer lived, it will be remembered, in the first half of the second century, and wrote the work in question certainly less than fifty years after the death of S. John the apostle.² Justin Martyr gives two accounts of the Eucharist. In the first, he describes the celebration which follows the baptism of a proselyte to Christianity; in the second, he describes the ordinary weekly celebration. After relating the ceremonies of baptism he proceeds thus:—

After we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, we bring him to the place

¹ 'Seque sacramento obstringere.' The word *sacramentum* had a variety of meanings: the money deposited by litigants at the commencement of a lawsuit was called *sacramentum*. The same word designated the military oath administered to recruits. Tertullian applies the word expressly to baptism and the Eucharist: 'Marem et feminam ad sacramentum baptismatis et eucharistiae admittens.'—*Adv. Marc.* 4, 34.

² The date of the *First Apology* is probably A.D. 145-6. See Tregelles, *Canon Muratorianus*, p. 70.

where those who are called the brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptised person, and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy now that we have learned the truth, by our works also to be found good citizens and keepers of the commandments; so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation.

Having ended our prayers we salute one another with the kiss of peace. Then there are brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he, taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the Universe through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings all the people present express their assent by saying Amen. This word Amen answers in the Hebrew language to 'so be it.' And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those who are present to partake of the bread and wine mingled with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.

And this food is called among us the Eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing which is for the remission of sins and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined.¹

This account should be collated with another given in the following chapter of the same treatise. Each gives some circumstances of the rite which are omitted by the other. Speaking of the ordinary weekly worship of the Christians, Justin Martyr proceeds thus:—

And the wealthy among us help the needy, and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place; and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. Then when the

¹ Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, cc. 65, 66.

reader has ceased the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president likewise offers prayers and thanksgivings as long as he has opportunity,¹ and the people assent, saying Amen. And there is a distribution to each and a participation of the Eucharistic elements, and to those who are not present it is sent by the deacons. And those who are prosperous and willing each, according to his inclination,² gives what he will. And what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows, and those who through sickness or any other cause are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and, in a word, takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, changing darkness and matter, made the world, and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead.³

Each of these descriptions of the Eucharist supplements the other, and together they present remarkable analogies with the rites prescribed in the earliest extant Christian liturgies.

This topic will be more fully considered hereafter; for the present it will suffice to observe that all the ancient liturgies are divided into two principal parts—the proanaphoral or introductory portion; and the anaphora or offering—the more solemn part of the Eucharistic service.

The proanaphoral part, which preceded the anaphora or oblation, included preparatory prayers—lections or reading

¹ *καὶ ὡς προσεστὼς εὐχὰς ὁμοίως καὶ εὐχαριστίας ὅση δύναμις αὐτῷ ἀναπέμπει.* In a previous sentence Justin says the lessons are read 'as long as time permits.' It is evident, therefore, that the services were occasionally abridged for want of time; a thing very likely to happen to the persecuted Christians. Also, in the preceding chapter, it is said that the minister offers thanks 'at considerable length,' which confirms the supposition that the prayers were sometimes curtailed.

The phrase *ὅση δύναμις αὐτῷ* has been sometimes translated 'according to his ability;' but this is almost unintelligible. There could be no question as to the 'ability' of the minister to offer the prayers if time sufficed.

² *κατὰ προαίρεσιν ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ.* S. Paul uses a very similar expression when he exhorts the Corinthians to give alms each according as he has inclined—or purposed—in his heart: *ἕκαστος καθὼς προήρηται τῇ καρδίᾳ* (2 Cor. ix. 7).

³ *First Apology*, c. 67.

of Scriptures, hymns, prayers after the Gospel, and the homily or sermons.

After the dismissal of catechumens and unbaptised persons, the service for the faithful commenced. The introductory part of this service consisted of prayers for the faithful, the offertory, the kiss of peace, and the creed. Then came the anaphora, properly so-called, which comprised the Eucharistic prayers, the consecration, the general intercessory prayer, and the communion.

If we carefully examine Justin Martyr's two accounts of the Eucharist, we shall find indubitable references to these various parts of the service, and the distinction between the proanaphoral and anaphoral portions is clear.

In his first account he speaks of hearty prayers for themselves and others, and in his second account he refers to the lessons from the apostles and prophets, and adds that when 'the reader has ceased the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things.'

Here we have obviously the proanaphoral part, including general prayers, the lections, and the homily. Justin does not say expressly that after this the catechumens withdraw, but he twice refers to the ending of prayers, showing that this part of the service was complete in itself. 'Having ended the prayers,' he says, 'we salute one another with a kiss of peace,' and again, 'when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought in.' This was obviously at the commencement of the service for the faithful, who alone, as he tells us, were allowed to partake of the Eucharist. His subsequent references to the kiss of peace, the consecration by the presiding minister, and the communion exactly accords with the ancient Liturgies. And it is very remarkable that the description of the prayer of consecration is identical with that adopted in the Liturgy, entitled the 'Liturgy of S. James.' Justin says that the minister, taking the bread and cup into his hands, offers thanks at considerable length, and the 'Liturgy of S. James' prefaces the consecration prayer with the note, 'then the priest [prays] at great length.'

The analogies between the rite described by Justin and those prescribed by the ancient Liturgies are too numerous

to be accidental. The fuller discussion of the antiquity of those Liturgies is reserved to another chapter; but enough has been said to show that when this 'First Apology' was written, and when probably some of the immediate disciples of the apostles were still alive, the Liturgy had acquired a settled and prescribed form.

It will be convenient to notice here briefly some of the incidental ceremonies described by Justin.

The mingling of water with wine before consecration was undoubtedly the general practice of the Church,¹ and was in conformity with the Jewish usage, followed, as we have seen, by Christ in the Last Supper.

The kiss of peace, another Eucharistic ceremony, is enjoined by the apostles Peter and Paul in several places.² It was a practice as old as the Church itself, and was continued for many centuries.

Tertullian thus eloquently reprehends a practice which had grown up in his day of withholding the kiss of peace during fasting:—

Another custom has now become prevalent. Such as are fasting withhold the kiss of peace, which is the seal of prayer, after prayer made with the brethren. But when is peace more to be concluded with the brethren than when at the time of religious observance our prayers ascend with more acceptability; that they may themselves participate in an observance and thereby be mollified for dealing with their brother touching their own peace? What prayer is complete if divorced from the holy kiss? Whom does peace impede when serving his Lord? What kind of sacrifice is this from which men depart without peace?³

The oblations offered by the people at the Eucharistic service were of two kinds: *firstly*, offerings for the clergy and the poor; *secondly*, offerings of the elements of bread and wine for the Eucharist. These two kinds of offerings are

¹ Irenæus (*Hæc.* b. v. c. 2, s. 3) speaks of 'the mingled cup.'

² 'Salute one another with an holy kiss,' Rom. xvi. 16; 'Greet ye one another with an holy kiss' (1 Cor. xvi. 20 and 2 Cor. xiii. 12); 'Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss' (1 Thess. v. 26); 'Greet ye one another with a kiss of love' (1 Peter v. 14).

³ *De Oratione*, c. 18.

noticed briefly but with sufficient distinctness by Justin, when he speaks of the 'bread and wine and water' consecrated by the minister, and subsequently mentions the collections for the poor.

Justin twice refers to the practice of sending the sacrament to those who are absent from the assembly. 'To those who are absent,' he says, 'they carry away a portion,' and again, 'to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons.' There is a remarkable passage in Tertullian which illustrates the necessity for this practice. He is arguing with his usual fervour that a Christian woman ought not to marry a heathen husband, who will not only endeavour to make her participate in heathen practices, but will also prevent her from taking part in Christian observances. Referring to this unequal yoke with unbelievers, he exclaims:—

Who will willingly bear her being taken from his side by nocturnal assemblies, if need so be? Who will without anxiety endure her absence all night long at the Paschal solemnities? Who will, without some suspicion of his own, let her go to attend that Lord's Supper which they defame?¹

And then follows this remarkable passage, in which he refers cautiously to the practice—unavoidable in his day—of partaking secretly of the reserved sacrament. He likens Christian ordinances to pearls.

Your pearls are the distinctive marks of your daily conversation. The more care you take to conceal them the more liable to suspicion you make them, and the more exposed to the grasp of Gentile curiosity. Shall you escape notice when you sign your bed or your body; when even by night you rise to pray? And will you not be thought to be engaged in some work of magic? Will not your husband know what it is that you secretly taste before all food, and if he knows it to be bread does he not believe it to be that thing which it is said to be?²

There can be no doubt that Tertullian here refers in cautious language to the practice of eating the sacrament privately—a practice in many cases rendered necessary by the persecution and danger to which Christians were exposed.

¹ *Ad Uxorem*, b. ii. c. 4.

² *Ib.* b. ii. c. 5.

The love feasts, or common meals of the early Christians, have been supposed by some writers to have been connected with the Eucharist; but in reality were entirely distinct from it. The only known instances of eating meals at the time of celebrating the Eucharist are those which occurred in the Corinthian Church. The practice was altogether irregular, and was condemned by the Apostle Paul.

Pliny, in the celebrated epistle to which frequent reference has been made, after describing the rites of the Christians in their assemblies before daybreak, says, 'After these things it was their custom to depart and to meet again to partake of a common innocent meal.¹ But this they gave up after my edict, in which by your order I prohibited clubs.'²

It is clear from the word which Pliny uses to denote clubs that he refers to convivial not religious meetings. These, he says, the Christians discontinued at his command. But we may be quite sure that the Christians who were ready to lay down their lives for their faith would not have discontinued the celebration of the Eucharist. The meals which they discontinued were the love feasts, which were quite distinct from the religious meetings, and were held—as Pliny expressly states—at a later hour of the day.

The origin of Christian love feasts must be sought for in the custom of the Jews of eating the principal meal of the day in common assemblies.

That this custom was very general appears by a consular decree made in the reign of the Emperor Caius (Caligula). This decree authorises the Jews of Delos 'to live according to their own customs, and to bring in contributions for common suppers and holy festivals,' and states that 'they are not forbidden so to do even at Rome itself; for even Caius Cæsar,

¹ 'Cibum promiscuum tamen et innoxium.'

² *Heterias*. These associations, called in Greek *ἐταιρίαι* or *ἐταίριαί*, established for charitable, convivial, or commercial purposes, have been already noticed. In the days of the Roman Empire such societies were frequent in the Greek cities, and were regarded with suspicion by the emperors as leading to political combinations. The custom of taking the principal meal of the day in public prevailed extensively among the Greeks. In Crete all the adult citizens partook of their meals in common halls, and were divided into companies or messes, called *hetairie*.

our imperator and consul, in that decree wherein he forbade the Bacchanal rioters to meet in the city, did yet permit Jews and these only both to bring in their contributions and to make their common suppers.’¹

There was a curious practice of the Jews called *Erub*, or commixture, by which the extreme rigour of the Sabbath rule was in some measure alleviated. *Erub* was a ceremonial union of places which otherwise would have been distinct—so that it would have been unlawful to carry anything from the one to the other on the Sabbath-day. The houses in one court were combined by the householders joining together to contribute food and deposit it in one place, by which the court became in law one general abode for all its inmates, who thereby became entitled to carry and convey articles from one place within it to another on the Sabbath-day.²

The first Christians at Jerusalem were of course familiar with these common meals, and the practical arrangements necessary for the proper management of them; and would readily adapt some of those arrangements to the circumstances of their own lives. We are told in the Acts of the Apostles³ that ‘all that believed were together and had all things in common.’ This close association almost necessarily implies the practice of eating meals together. In a subsequent verse it is said that the disciples ‘broke bread,’ or celebrated the Eucharist at home, and did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.’⁴ This reference to eating meat is unintelligible, unless we suppose that they ate together. The

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xiv. c. 10, s. 8.

² *Eighteen Treatises from the ‘Mishna,’* by Sola, Introduction to the treatise ‘*Erubin*.’ Dr. J. Lightfoot, in his *Exercitations on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (c. 10, v. 17), gives substantially the same account of the *Erub*, which he translates *κοινωνία*, communion.

It must be remembered that the Sabbath was especially a day of conviviality among the Jews. The Mosaic law prohibited menial labour on that day, but not convivial entertainments. Christ ‘went into the house of one of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath day,’ when numerous other guests—as the narrative shows—were present (Luke xiv.). Dr. Lightfoot remarks on this passage that ‘the Jews’ tables were generally better spread on that day than on any other; and that, as they themselves reckoned, upon the account of religion and piety.’—*Exercitations upon S. Luke*, xiv. 1.

³ Acts ii. 44.

⁴ Acts ii. 46.

'tables'¹ which the Seven were chosen to serve were not holy tables but common. In the Epistle of S. Jude the holding of 'feasts of love' is expressly mentioned as a common practice.

Tertullian gives a most interesting account of these feasts. He describes, it is true, what occurred in his own times—the close of the second century; but the usage probably resembled that of the first age of Christianity.

In his 'Apology,'² addressed to the rulers of the Roman Empire, he says:—

Our feast explains itself by its name. The Greeks call it love. Whatever it costs, our outlay in the name of piety is gain. Since with the good things of the feast we benefit the needy; but as it is with you, parasites aspire to the glory of satisfying their licentious propensities, selling themselves for a gluttonous feast to all disgraceful treatment; but as it is with God Himself—a peculiar respect is shown to the lowly. If the object of our feast be good, in the light of that consider its further regulations. As it is an act of religious service it commits no vileness or immodesty. The participants before reclining taste first of prayer to God. As much is eaten as satisfies the cravings of hunger. As much is drunk as befits the chaste. They say, It is enough—as those who remember that even during the night they have to worship God. They talk as those who know that the Lord is one of those who hears them. After washing their hands and bringing in lights each is asked to stand forth and sing as he can a hymn to God, either one from Holy Scripture or one of his own composing: a proof of the measure of our drinking. As the feast commenced with prayer so with prayer it is closed. We go from it not like troops of mischief-doers, nor bands of roamers, nor to break out into licentious acts, but to have as much care of our modesty and chastity as if we had been at a school of virtue rather than a banquet.³

¹ Acts vi. 3. Lightfoot observes that these tables could not have been those of the Lord's Supper, because the apostles did not resign to the Seven the administering of the sacrament.—*Commentary on the Acts*, in loco.

In the *Epistle to Diognetus*, which was probably written in Apostolic times, it is expressly stated (c. 5) that the Christians have a common table.

² C. 39.

³ One of the purposes of the agape was to provide food gratuitously for the poorer members of the church. In the *Apostolic Constitutions* (b. ii. c. 2)

It is clear from the reference to the bringing of lights after washing the hands, that the feast took place at night-fall. This accords with Pliny's statement that the Christians assembled for the sacrament before daylight, then departed, and afterwards met again to take a meal in common.

There is not the slightest reference in ancient writers to a combination of the Love Feast with the Eucharist.

Tertullian, in another place, distinctly states that the sacrament was eaten before dawn, and before all other food. In order to rightly understand this frequently mistranslated passage we must pay attention to the general scope of the context. The writer is arguing that there are many Christian observances for which no written authority exists, but for which, as they have been long established, some authority must have been originally given. He adduces several instances. First, he mentions baptism. The formula used in baptism differs somewhat, he says, from that of the New Testament. 'We are thrice immersed, making a somewhat ampler pledge than the Lord has appointed in the Gospel.' Then he adverts to similar deviations in the Eucharistic service from the rites observed at Christ's Last Supper. 'The Eucharistic sacrament also, which was ordained at the time of a meal for all, we take in assemblies before daybreak, and only from the hands of the presiding ministers.'¹ There is here a double antithesis. The present practice, he says, in effect differs in two particulars from the original institution. (1.) The Eucharist, instituted by Christ, was taken at a supper, and now, on the contrary, the sacrament is taken before daybreak. (2.) Originally all present divided it among

we find this: 'If any determine to invite elder women to an agape or feast, as our Saviour calls it, let them most frequently send to one whom the deacons know to be in distress.' We do not know for certain when this was written, but it undoubtedly represents a primitive usage.

¹ 'Eucharistiæ sacramentum et in tempore victûs et omnibus mandatum a Domino etiam antelucanis cœtibus nec de aliorum manu quam presidentium sumimus' (*De Coronâ*, c. 3). The word *etiam* connects this sentence with what precedes, and must be translated 'also.' Some translators connect *etiam* with *antelucanis cœtibus*, and translate the words 'even in assemblies before daylight,' as if such assemblies were exceptional. But that is clearly wrong; for the very gist of Tertullian's argument is that the practice is not exceptional, but general.

themselves,¹ but now it is received from the hand of the priest only.

Tertullian then proceeds to describe other religious customs of his day, and concludes, in his usual fervent manner:—‘If for these and other such rules you insist upon having positive Scripture injunction, you will find none. Tradition will be assigned to you as the originator of them, custom as their strengthener, and faith as their observer.’

The testimony here given as to the early celebration of the Eucharist in the time of Tertullian is plain and clear.

Eusebius, early in the fourth century, states that in his day the practice of Christians to celebrate the Eucharist at daybreak on Sunday was universal. In his ‘Commentary on the Forty-sixth Psalm,’ he says that the words, ‘God shall help us, and that right early,’ prefigure ‘those morning assemblies in which we are accustomed to meet in assemblies throughout the world.’ Again, he interprets the fifty-ninth psalm as prophetic of ‘the worship of Him celebrated in the assembly throughout the world on every dawn of the resurrection day.’ Similarly, in his ‘Commentary on the Twenty-second Psalm,’ he says that ‘on every resurrection day of our Saviour—which is called the Lord’s-day—those who partake of the holy food and saving body, after they have eaten, adore the Giver and Purveyor of that life-giving food.’²

Putting these three passages together we see that, at the date when Eusebius wrote, the Christians always assembled for worship on Sundays, that they assembled early in the morning, and that on those occasions the Eucharist was always celebrated.

It may be argued that the practice in the time of Tertullian—the end of the second century, and of Eusebius—the first half of the fourth century—was not necessarily the practice of the first century. But it must be remembered that there is not a hint or suggestion in early writers of any other

¹ ‘Take this, and divide it among yourselves,’ Luke xxii. 17.

² *Eusebii Commentarii ad Psalmos* (Monfaucon, *Collectio Nova Patrum*). Psalms xxii., xlv., and lix. in our Version are, according to the enumeration adopted by Eusebius (that of the Septuagint), Psalms xxi., xlv., and lviii. respectively.

practice. The authorities are scanty, for the simple reason that that practice was so notorious, that there was scarcely any occasion to refer to it. In every age there are usages so familiarly known that no one thinks it worth while to record them.

The express references to early and fasting communion are few, but they are adequate. Recapitulating the authorities already cited we find:—

That S. Paul celebrated the Eucharist at Troas before day-break and before the first meal of the day.

That in the Liturgy of the 'Apostolic Constitutions,' written most probably in the first century, the Eucharist is directed to be celebrated early in the morning.

That, at the commencement of the second century, Pliny expressly states that this was the practice of the Christians of Bithynia.

That, in the commencement of the third century, Tertullian expressly states that Christians regularly partook of the sacrament before dawn.

That Eusebius, at the commencement of the fourth century, states that this was the universal and settled practice of all Christendom.

Eusebius, it may be added, was eminent for his learning and knowledge of Christian history. He had access to records of that history which have long since perished. If any other usage but that of early communion had existed in any of the churches, Eusebius must have been aware of it, and in that case he certainly would not have stated, as he does, that the Eucharist was celebrated at dawn throughout the world.

There were abundant reasons for these morning celebrations. While the temple services at Jerusalem were continued, the morning sacrifice was killed as soon as there was daylight.¹ The first Christians at Jerusalem were therefore

¹ 'Then doth the president say to them, Go and see whether it be time to kill the daily sacrifice. One or another went to the top of some of the buildings about the temple; and when he sees it fair day he saith, It is fair day. Aye, but (saith the president) is the heaven bright all up to Hebron? He answers, Yes. Then saith he, Go and fetch the lamb.'—Lightfoot, *Temple Service*, c. 9, s. 3.

accustomed to early worship. And the persecutions to which they were subjected rendered it necessary to choose an hour for their assemblies when they were least exposed to observation and interruption. The same motive would apply still more forcibly with regard to Christian communities among the heathen. Many members of those communities were slaves, and frequently it would have been impracticable for them to absent themselves from their master's houses, in order to attend Christian assemblies in the middle or latter part of the day.

Persecuted and oppressed, they needs must worship in secrecy and by stealth. The slave, be it remembered, was a chattel—the absolute property of his master, who might slay, scourge, torture, or brand him at pleasure. The Christian slave was in constant danger of martyrdom; and even those Christians who were not of servile condition were so much hated by the heathen populace, and so entirely at the mercy of the magistrates, as to be in jeopardy every hour.

It was a common reproach of the first Christians that they held secret assemblies and practised secret rites. But this secrecy was observed in self-defence. They possessed no glorious temples. The pomp and grandeur of stately religious ceremonies they could not have. But they did their best to honour the highest act of Christian worship. They devoted to it—not wealth, not costly oblations—but the still more precious gifts of humility, self-denial, abstinence, and self-sacrifice.

CHAPTER XVII.

SUNDAY.

FROM the commencement of the Apostolic era Christians were accustomed to assemble for worship on the first day of the week; but they did not regard that day as a Sabbath.

The evidence on this subject is derived partly from Scriptural and partly from other writings.

It will be convenient to collect in the first place all the relevant passages in the New Testament. They are as follows:—

Now late on the Sabbath-day, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre (S. Matt. xxviii. 1).

And very early on the first day of the week they came to the tomb when the sun was risen (S. Mark xvi. 2).

Now when He was risen early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene (S. Mark xvi. 9).

And the women which had come with Him out of Galilee followed after, and beheld the tomb, and how His body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. And on the Sabbath they rested, according to the commandment. But on the first day of the week at early dawn they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared (S. Luke xxiii. 54; xxiv. 1).

And, behold, two of them were going that very day to a village called Emmaus, which was threescore furlongs from Jerusalem (S. Luke xxiv. 13).

Now on the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb (S. John xx. 1).

When, therefore, it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst (S. John xx. 19).

And after eight days again His disciples were within and

Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst (S. John xx. 26).

And when the day of Pentecost was now come they were all together in one place (Acts ii. 1).

And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we tarried seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where we were gathered together. And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, borne down with deep sleep: and as Paul discoursed yet longer, being borne down by his sleep, he fell down from the third storey, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Make ye no ado; for his life is in him. And when he was gone up and had broken the bread and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. And they brought the lad alive, and were not a little comforted. But we, going before to the ship, set sail for Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so he had appointed, intending himself to go by land. And when he met us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene (Acts xx. 6-14).

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come (1 Cor. xvi. 1).

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's-day (Rev. i. 10).¹

These are all the passages of the New Testament which in any way relate to any observance by Christians of the first

¹ There are, however, one or two incidental notices of first days of the week occurring before the Crucifixion. Thus S. Mark speaks of Christ teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, 'and in the morning rising up a great while before day He went out, and departed into a solitary place and prayed' (Mark i. 35). The call of the apostles Andrew and Peter appears to have taken place on a Sunday, for we are told that 'on the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee' (John ii. 1). By uniform custom the marriage of a maiden took place on Wednesday, and, if it were so in this case, the call of Andrew and Peter must have been on the previous Sunday (see Eidersheim's *Life and Times of Jesus*, b. iii. c. 3).

day of the week. Several of the passages show that it was the practice to assemble on that day for Christian worship, not one of them that the first day was regarded as a Sabbath. Some of them show distinctly that it was not so regarded.

The first three passages relate to the resurrection. The third of them proves conclusively that after the crucifixion the disciples considered themselves bound to observe the Mosaic or Jewish Sabbath.

On the Friday—the day of preparation—Joseph of Arimathea had begged the body of Pilate, and laid it in the tomb. At the dawn of the next day—the Sabbath—the women who followed him from Galilee beheld the tomb and how the body was laid, and they returned and prepared spices to anoint the body. But they did not proceed with these pious offices. Why? Simply because it was the Sabbath, and according to the Jewish rule it was unlawful to anoint a dead body on that day.¹ The obligation of the seventh day was the sole cause. We are distinctly told that was the reason and no other: ‘on the Sabbath-day they rested, according to the commandment.’

The statement of S. Luke is fatal to the theory that Christ had transferred the obligation of the seventh day of the week to the first day. But this argument does not stop here. S. Luke tells us a little further on that on this first day—on Sunday—two of the disciples were going to Emmaus, a village threescore furlongs,² or about seven miles from Jerusalem. A Sabbath-day’s journey was about two-thirds of an English mile. If the obligation of the Sabbath had been transferred to the Sunday, it is clear that the disciples would not have walked to Emmaus and back—a distance of about fourteen miles—on that day.

The account given in the Acts of the Apostles of the assembly at Troas on the first day of the week shows in the same way that S. Paul and his companions had no objection to travelling on Sunday. In reading this account we must

¹ Lightfoot, *Exercitationes on S. Mark*, xvi. 1.

² *σταδίου ἑξήκοντα*. The Greek stadium, equal to about 606 English feet, was rather less than an English furlong.

carefully bear in mind that the 'day' of the Bible began at sunset. Another consideration necessary to the right understanding of the passage is the frequent practice of both Jews and Christians to spend night hours in prayer and religious exercises. There are numerous examples of the vigils both in the Old Testament and the New.¹

These matters being premised, let us turn to the account of the vigil at Troas. It is distinctly stated that it took place on the 'first day of the week.' It must have commenced in the evening, for the 'day' began at sunset, and Paul 'prolonged his speech until midnight.' Also it is evident that the disciples met with the full intention of spending the whole night together; for we are told that they were gathered together to break bread, and that Paul discoursed with them, 'intending to depart on the morrow.'

There is not the slightest ground for supposing that this assembly was unexpectedly prolonged by the fall of Eutychus from the window. On the contrary, we find that S. Paul, after he had restored him, returned to the upper chamber and celebrated the Eucharist, and then partook of a social meal.² Even then he did not hurry away, for it is added, that he 'talked with them a long while, even till break of day.'

At break of what day? Clearly that first day of the week which had commenced the previous evening. And how was this Sunday morning spent by S. Paul and his companions? As to them, they had gone forward to their ship which had laid at Troas, and spent the Sunday in navigating her to Assos. As for S. Paul, he spent the hours after daybreak in

¹ For example, S. Luke says that Christ spent the night preceding the choice of the apostles in prayer, 'He went out into the mountain to pray, and He continued all night in prayer to God' (Luke vi. 12). S. Peter, when he was delivered from prison into which Herod had cast him, went to a house 'where many were gathered together and were praying' (Acts xii. 12). Verses 6 and 18 of the same chapter show that this assembly was in the night. So in the Old Testament Samuel 'cried unto the Lord all night' (1 Sam. xv. 11), and David 'fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth' (2 Sam. xii. 16).

² The celebration of the Eucharist is described by the words *κλάσας τὸν ἄρτον* = having broken the bread. The subsequent meal by *καὶ γευσάμενος* = and having taken food. It should be observed that S. Luke speaks of breaking the bread; not 'breaking bread,' as in our 'Authorised' Version.

walking from Troas to Assos—a distance of upwards of twenty English miles. All this—be it observed—was done deliberately. There was nothing of an accidental character about the proceedings of either S. Paul or his companions. He had commenced his sermon, ‘intending to depart on the morrow,’ and they had set sail for Assos by previous arrangement, ‘for so he had appointed, intending himself to go by land.’¹

The apostle’s course lay through the valleys at the foot of Mount Ida,² amid scenes which have been described by the

¹ The accompanying map shows the relative position of the places. The dotted line between Troas and Assos indicates approximately the road taken by S. Paul. His journey on foot was considerably shorter than that of his companions, who had to sail round the promontory.



- ² To Ida's topmost height he came,
Fair nurse of fountains and of savage game,
Where, o'er her pointed summits proudly rais'd,
His fane breathed odours and his altar blaz'd.—

Pope's *Homer's Iliad*, b. viii. 57.

There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling through the clov'n ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning; but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.—

Tennyson's *Ænone*.

greatest of ancient poets and the master singer of our own time. We are not told the reason which induced the apostle to take this journey on foot. Troas and the neighbouring country had been the frequent scene of his missionary labours, and probably he wished to bid farewell to some of the disciples on the road to Assos. But however that may be, it is clear that he did not consider that he was violating any divine command in taking a journey on Sunday, or first day of the week, by land, and in directing S. Luke and his companions to take a journey by sea on the same day.

Let us now turn to the other passages cited at the commencement of this chapter, which relate to assemblies on the first day of the week. The passages from S. John's Gospel which relate to such assemblies do not expressly state that they were held for religious purposes. But there is another passage which shows almost conclusively that this must have been the case. S. Luke says the apostles had an upper chamber in which 'they were abiding,' and after giving their names adds, 'These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.'¹

We next proceed to the passage in the Acts of the Apostles relating to the day of Pentecost. That day was a Sunday, for it was held fifty days after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which in that year fell on a Saturday. We are told that on this Pentecostal Sunday the disciples 'were all together in one place.' It is manifest from the context that they were assembled for religious purposes.

The passage from the First Epistle to the Corinthians is apparently to the same effect. It has indeed been disputed whether the words translated 'lay by him in store'² refer to private acts, or to general collections made in the Christian assemblies. But the latter is the more probable interpretation, for the apostle goes on to give the reason for this weekly collection, namely, 'that there be no collection when I come.' Obviously his object would be defeated if there were

¹ Acts i. 14.

² τιθέτω θησαυρίζων.

only a private storing and no general collection until his arrival.

The last passage—that from the Apocalypse—does not refer to assemblies at all; but it is interesting, as the most ancient example of the use of the phrase ‘the Lord’s-day.’¹

This concludes our examination of all passages of the New Testament which bear on the subject. The general result of the examination is this: that the first Christians had a regular day for religious services—the first day of the week—and that it had no connection whatever with the institution of the Sabbath.

Several of the early Fathers distinctly and expressly state that Christians ought not to observe the Sabbath. Thus Ignatius says:—

Those who were brought up in the ancient order of things have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord’s-day, on which also our life has sprung up again by Him and by His death.²

In several places Justin Martyr declares³ that the Sabbath is no longer obligatory, but tolerated. And it is clear from

¹ The use of the phrase ‘the Lord’s-day’ is rare in writers of the first and second centuries. The following passage from the writings of Ignatius, who suffered martyrdom early in the second century, probably but not certainly refers to the Lord’s-day. He describes Christians as ‘no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord’s [day], on which also one life has sprung up again by Him and by His death.’—*Ad Magnes*, c. 9. But the text is doubtful, and the word for ‘day’ is not in it. The next is a clearer instance: Dionysius of Corinth, in an epistle to Soter, Bishop of Rome, in the latter half of the second century, says, ‘To-day we have passed the Lord’s holy day, in which we have read your epistle, in reading which we shall always have our minds stored with admonition.’—Eusebius, *H. E.* b. iv. c. 23. Tertullian rebukes Christians for observing Gentile festivals, and adds, the Gentiles ‘would not have shared with us the Lord’s-day or Pentecost, even if they had known them, for fear they should seem to be Christians.’—*De Idolatriâ*, c. 14.

² This is the translation in the Ante-Nicene Library. But it has been observed in a former note that the word for ‘day’ does not exist in the original Greek. One reading is, *μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακὴν ζῶντες*; literally, ‘no longer sabbatising, but living according to the Lord’s life.’

³ *Dial. cum Tryph.* cc. 19, 29, 41.

his language that there were numbers, not only of Jewish Christians, but also of Gentile converts, who observed the Sabbath, or seventh day, as well as the Lord's-day. In his 'Dialogue with Trypho' he is asked by Trypho whether Gentile believers in Christ, who observe the Mosaic institutions, can be saved. Justin replies that if such persons choose to 'live with the Christians, and are faithful, as I said before, not inducing them either to be circumcised like themselves, or to keep the Sabbath, or to observe any other such ceremonies, then I hold we ought to join ourselves to such, and associate with them in all things as kinsmen and brethren.'¹

This reply shows a wise moderation and toleration, but is far from an approval of the Sabbath. It is put on the same footing as circumcision. It is an institution not merely modified, but absolutely obsolete. Yet those who maintain it are to be treated with indulgence. They are to be admitted to Christian communion, provided that they do not persuade others to follow their example.

Dionysius of Corinth (A.D. 170) in a letter already quoted speaks of keeping 'the Lord's holy day.' Irenæus, who, as it was stated in a previous chapter, took part in the controversy about Easter, wrote an epistle in which he maintains the duty of celebrating the mystery of the Resurrection of our Lord only on the day of the Lord.² The passage manifestly shows that whatever controversy there might be about the time of keeping Easter, the Lord's-day was universally observed throughout Christendom, but not in any way assimilated to the Sabbath.

Lastly, Tertullian, who wrote towards the close of the second century, strenuously argues against the observance of the Sabbath. In his answer to the Jews he has a chapter on the 'observance of the Sabbath,'³ in which he insists that it was a 'temporary institution.' The precept was not eternal nor spiritual, but temporal, which would one day cease. And further on he repeats, 'that it was not with a view to its observance in perpetuity that God formerly gave them such a law.'

¹ *Dial. cum Tryph.* c. 46.

² *Eccl. Hist.* b. v. c. 24.

³ *Adv. Judæos*, c. 4.

These are the principal passages from writings of the first and second centuries which relate to the Sabbath and the Lord's-day. A few others to the same effect might have been added, but not any to a contrary effect. After a most careful and laborious research, it is asserted with confidence that there is not one writer of the first or second century who suggests that Christians of their times regarded the Lord's-day as a substitute for the Sabbath. Neither is there any evidence whatever in those early writings that Christians abstained from their usual labours on Sunday, except so far as was necessary for the purpose of attending their assemblies. The earliest suggestion that Christians should abstain from labour on Sunday is contained in a passage of Tertullian, written not before the close of the second century, in which he refers to the traditional practice of praying in a standing attitude on the Lord's-day. He says: 'We, as we have received, on the day of the Lord's resurrection alone, ought to abstain from kneeling, and from every posture and office of solicitude, deferring even our businesses, lest we give place to the devil.'¹ But this advice to defer matters of business is limited to the time of prayer, not to the whole of the Lord's-day. Up to the time when Tertullian wrote, that is, for more than a century after the last surviving apostle left the earth, there is not the very slightest trace of a practice of abstaining from ordinary pursuits on the Lord's-day, excepting during the time devoted to Christian assemblies.²

¹ 'Differentes etiam negotia, ne quem diabolo locum demus.'—*De Orat.* c. xxiii. The first instance of any command to abstain from labour on the first day of the week is an edict of the Emperor Constantine (A.D. 321) directing that law courts and shops in cities should be closed on Sundays. But even that edict directed that the work of cultivating land should be continued. Before the time of Constantine we shall search in vain for any decree or injunction or ordinance, secular or ecclesiastical, prohibiting labour on the first day of the week, except so far as attendance at Christian assemblies required.

² Dr. Hessey, in his *Dampton Lectures* on 'Sunday, its Origin, History, and Present Obligations,' says (Lecture 5) that the designation of the Lord's-day as the 'Christian Sabbath' 'was unknown to early antiquity, and does not appear until the twelfth century.' These lectures contain an amazing amount of research, and show conclusively that the Lord's-day has no connection with the Sabbath.

Ancient Christian writers uniformly treated the fourth commandment in the Decalogue as temporary, and binding on the Jews only. Modern writers have frequently laboured to show that this commandment is perpetual and binding on Christians. It is said that the fourth commandment is associated with others which are evidently permanent and of universal application, and that therefore the fourth commandment is of the same character.

But in the first place, it is to be observed that the Decalogue is expressly addressed to the Jews. It is prefaced in the book of Exodus by the words, 'I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage;' ¹ and these words evidently referred to the Israelites. And in the repetition of the Decalogue in the Book of Deuteronomy there is this preface: 'Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day.' ² The people to whom these laws were given were the Jews, and we have no right to assume without proof that they are all binding upon other nations.

This observation applies with special force to the fourth commandment of the Decalogue. In the Book of Deuteronomy at the end of this commandment it is added, 'And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath.' Here it is distinctly stated that the commandment was imposed because of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

In the second place, it is not a necessary inference that because some of the commandments are perpetual, all must be perpetual. It is quite certain that some parts of the Decalogue are of a temporary character. The commandment, 'Thou shalt not make to thee any graven image,' absolutely prohibited statuary. The Jews were forbidden not only to worship graven images, but were not allowed even to make them. ³ Yet nobody would contend the Christians may not make or possess statues and sculpture.

¹ Exodus xx. 2.

² Deut. v. 1.

³ That the Jews always understood the second commandment in this sense

Again, the injunction, 'Honour thy father and mother,' is followed by a promise, 'that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' The promised land was evidently Canaan, and consequently that part of the Decalogue concerned the Jews only.

The commandment directs that the seventh day of the week, and not the first, is to be so observed. It is a fallacy to reply that this distinction is unimportant, that if one day in seven is kept holy it matters not which day of the week that is. This suggestion implies a very inadequate conception of the nature of commandments. If they are binding at all they are binding altogether. Those who are subject to them are not at liberty to say that some parts are important and some unimportant; that some parts must be obeyed and others may be disregarded.

In order to escape from this difficulty it has been sometimes suggested that at the commencement of the Christian dispensation there must have been some Divine precept changing the day of the Sabbath, that either Christ or the apostles changed the day. But where is the evidence of this? There

is incontrovertible. Josephus (*Antiq. b. viii. c. 7*), referring to the history of Solomon, says, 'He sinned and fell into an error about the observation of the law when he made the images of brazen oxen that supported the brazen sea and the images of lions about his own throne.' In the first Book of Kings (vii. 25) we are told that this 'brazen sea' stood on twelve oxen. The presence of these images in the temple gave so much offence to the Jews that Ahab removed them (2 Kings xvi. 17). The Jews cut to pieces a golden eagle which Herod set up in the temple; 'For it was unlawful,' says Josephus (*Wars, b. i. c. 33, s. 2*), 'that there should be any such thing in the temple as images or faces or the like representation of any animal whatever.' The Jews were excited to tumult by the introduction by Pilate of images of Tiberius into the temple (Josephus, *Wars, b. ii. c. 9*), and were driven to frenzy in the reign of Caius Caligula by a proposal to erect a statue of that emperor in the temple. At the intercession of Agrippa the intention was abandoned. Philo Judæus (*Office of Ambassadors, c. 36*) gives a long letter from Agrippa to Caligula, in which it is urged that the erection of any images or statues in the temple would be an intolerable innovation. Philo Judæus, in his treatise on the Ten Commandments (s. 29), says: 'The second commandment is the summary of all those laws which can possibly be enacted about things made by hands, such as statues and images, and, in short, erections of any kind of which painting and statuary are pernicious creators; for that commandment forbids such images to be made.'

is not an iota of such evidence in the New Testament, and there is cogent evidence to the contrary. The conduct of the pious women who refrained from anointing the body of Christ on the Sabbath-day 'because of the commandment' shows that after the crucifixion the 'commandment' to keep holy the seventh day was still in force. The walk of the disciples to Emmaus and the journeyings of S. Paul and his companions on the first day of the week show that the Sabbath obligation had not been transferred to that day.

Those who maintain the theory that the obligation of the Sabbath was transferred to the first day of the week cannot tell us by whose authority or at what time or in what manner the transfer was made.

Besides, is it credible that if a command to change the day of the Sabbath had been given either by Christ or His apostles, we should not find some reference to it in the pages of the earliest Christian writers? We do not find in their writings the faintest allusion to such a command having been given.

Again, if the fourth commandment in the Decalogue is perpetual, it must have been obligatory before the time of Moses. Yet in the Old Testament there is not any statement that the patriarchs observed the Sabbath or that they had any knowledge of such an institution. It is true that it is said in the Book of Genesis that after the work of creation 'God blessed the seventh day' and sanctified it.¹ But the account does not go on to say that this sanctification of the seventh day was announced to the primæval human race, or that any obligation was imposed on them with reference to it. We have no reason whatever to suppose that this sanctification of the seventh day was declared before the time of Moses.

The idea that the patriarchs were acquainted with the

¹ It is not necessary for the purpose of the argument in the text to determine the meaning of the word 'day' in the text. Probably it means in the Book of Genesis, as in other parts of the Bible, an epoch of time. It could hardly mean a day measured by the apparent diurnal motion of the sun. For, according to the Mosaic account, the sun was created on the fourth 'day,' and the previous 'days' could not be measured by the apparent motion of a celestial body before it existed.

Sabbath is a surmise founded on *à priori* considerations. It is first assumed that they ought to have been acquainted with it, and thence inferred that as a fact they were acquainted with it. The fallacy of such an argument is palpable.

If we resort to the safer ground of history we find that the Sabbath was an institution which began and ended with the Mosaic dispensation. In the Old Testament there is no reference to the Sabbath before the time of Moses—not one syllable about the observance of the day by the patriarchs. In the New Testament there is no reference to the continuance of the obligation as part of the Christian religion.

By the apostles the Sabbath was tolerated, but not enjoined. We have abundant proof that during the period comprised in the Acts of the Apostles the Christians at Jerusalem frequented the temple, and joined in worship with other Jews. Thus the disciples are described as ‘day by day continuing steadfastly in the temple.’¹ Again, ‘Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.’² It is not probable that Christians could thus conform with the Judaic worship without observing that most solemn of Judaic institutions—the Sabbath.

Among the apostles S. Paul was certainly the foremost to declare that the Mosaic rule was abrogated. Yet even he conformed with it. He had received a remarkable warning—we might almost say admonition—from the Church at Jerusalem. The Levitical rites were not obligatory on the Gentiles; but with Jewish converts the case was altogether different. They must still comply with Mosaic ordinances, and S. Paul himself is urged by the Church of Jerusalem to demonstrate that he walked ‘orderly, keeping the law.’³ This expression is very remarkable. The ‘law’ is clearly the Mosaic law, and if S. Paul kept that, he obviously must have observed the Sabbath, which was the very cardinal point of the law.

This was in accordance with his own declared policy. ‘To the Jews I became as a Jew that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law that I might gain them that are under

¹ Ac s ii. 46.

² Acts iii. 1.

³ Acts xxi. 26.

the law.'¹ But while thus indulgent to the habits and prejudices of Jews, he adopts far different language in addressing Gentile converts. 'Ye observe days and months and years,' says he to the Galatians. Does he commend them for this? On the contrary, he adds this mournful rebuke: 'I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labour upon you in vain.'² In like manner, addressing the Church of Colossæ, he says: 'Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is Christ's.'³ Such language is absolutely fatal to the theory of a Christian Sabbath.

Even after the temple was destroyed and its magnificent ritual had ceased, some of the Christian Jews continued to observe the Sabbath. Justin Martyr, in a passage already cited, says the conduct of such persons is to be tolerated but not commended. But he is emphatic in repudiating any obligation on the part of Christians to observe the Sabbath.⁴ And the testimony of other writers of the second century are equally emphatic to the same effect.⁵

As to the mode in which the Lord's-day was observed in the first century, the sources of information are somewhat scanty, but they are sufficient. They show clearly that the Christians assembled before dawn on the first day of the week to celebrate the Eucharist, and afterwards proceeded to their ordinary daily labours and occupations.

The uniformity of the practice of devoting the first hours of the Lord's-day to worship is another of the many proofs of

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 20.

² Gal. iv. 10.

³ Col. ii. 16.

⁴ *Dialogue with Trypho*, c. 47. In another part of this remarkable dialogue (c. 9) Trypho, the Jew whom Justin endeavours to persuade of the truths of Christianity, confesses to a kind of admiration of the precepts of the gospel, but adds: 'This is what we are most at a loss about that you, professing to be pious and supposing yourselves to be better than others, are not in any particular separated from them, and do not alter your mode of living from the Gentiles, in that you observe no festivals or sabbaths, and do not have the rite of circumcision' (*Dialogue*, c. 10); that is to say, a pious Jew considers it a strong argument against Christianity that Christians disregarded the Sabbath. This passage alone demonstrates—considering the time when it was written—that the first Christians had not a Sabbath nor anything like it.

⁵ Ignatius to the Magnesians and Tertullian, *Adv. Judæos*, ubi supra.

the unity of the Church. The little Christian congregations of the first century, scattered far and wide throughout the Roman empire, were all agreed in this, that the commencement of that day—which to them was the most joyful of days—when, while ‘it was yet dark,’ the stone was rolled away from His tomb, should be dedicated evermore to His worship. How the agreement so to consecrate the morning of the Lord’s-day was made we know not. On that point the New Testament is absolutely silent; but the fact itself is certain. Persecuted and oppressed the first Christians were too often compelled to meet by stealth. Yet as each band of disciples stole to some secret place of assembly in the darkness before dawn, they were cheered by the thought that their persecuted brethren throughout Christendom in like manner greeted with prayer the first rays of that light which typified for them the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.

NOTE ON THE JEWISH SABBATH.

There is a prevalent idea that the Jews abstained from amusements as well as from work on the Sabbath-day; but this idea is quite erroneous. They were neither commanded to abstain from amusement on that day, nor as a fact did they so abstain.

The commandment prohibited all manner of 'work.' It did not prohibit any occupation not involving 'work.'

Accordingly, the Pharisaic rules, which lay down with the utmost minuteness what acts were unlawful, relate only to acts involving physical labour, and say nothing whatever about other occupations.

The Sabbath was a day of festivity and hospitality. The learned Dr. Lightfoot says, 'The Jews' tables were generally better spread on that day than on any others, and that, as they themselves reckoned, upon account of religion and piety.'—'Exercitationes on S. Luke xiv. 1.'

Christ was present at a convivial entertainment on the Sabbath day.

'And it came to pass as he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on a Sabbath to eat bread' (Luke xiv. 1). The guests, as the context shows, were numerous: the host was a Pharisee, and therefore, it may be presumed, a strict observer of the Pharisaic rules respecting the Sabbath.

Again, the Sabbath was a common day for the assembly of the Sanhedrim for political or judicial purposes. Maimonides says, 'The great Sanhedrim sat after morning daily sacrifice to the afternoon daily sacrifice; and on Sabbaths and feast days it sat in Beth-midrash in the court of the Gentiles.'—'Sanhedr.' cap. 3.

Josephus, who was a strict Pharisee (as he states in his *Life*, sect. 2), attended a large political meeting on the Sabbath—where the subjects discussed were purely secular—and that this was not regarded as a violation of the Sabbath is clear from the manner in which the meeting terminated. He says, 'The multitude were not pleased with what was said, and had certainly gone into a tumult if the sixth hour [noon], which was now come, had not dissolved the assembly, at which hour our laws require us to go to dinner on Sabbath days.'—'Life,' sect. 54.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT.

WE are so accustomed to refer to the writings of the New Testament as the supreme authority on matters of Christian doctrine, that we can hardly realise the fact that the first Christians had not a New Testament.

The majority of those who profess extreme reverence for those writings—or rather for a translation of them—pass through life without seriously inquiring as to the means by which their authority is ascertained. It is not enough to say they are divinely inspired. How do we know that they are divinely inspired? They were not produced in any supernatural way. The various books were written by human hands. There is nothing in their history which is mystic or miraculous—nothing which resembles the fable of the Elysian image ‘which fell down from Jupiter.’

There are far more printed copies of the translated New Testament than of any other volume extant. Christians refer to it as the foundation of their belief, the final and supreme authority on questions of Christian doctrine; and yet, as we said, very few of them know how the authenticity of the volume is determined.

We do not escape from the necessity of this inquiry by calling the Bible the Holy Bible or the sacred volume. A multiplication of such phrases proves nothing. How do we know that it is ‘holy’ or ‘sacred’? During the age in which the books of the New Testament were written, a multitude of others were also written which are now universally condemned as spurious and erroneous. Who was it that first

distinguished the genuine from the spurious, the true from the false?

That surely is a question of vital importance, but it is a very difficult one, and the answer cannot be given concisely and off-hand. The *canon*, or orthodox list of books of the New Testament, has been the subject of research and controversy from the commencement of Christianity to our own times. Even now that canon cannot be regarded as finally settled. There are portions of the 'Authorised' English New Testament which to this day are disputed. In the Revised Version of 1881 the genuineness of the passage in S. John's Gospel relating to the woman taken in adultery is doubted, and the celebrated passage in the First Epistle of S. John relating to the three heavenly witnesses has been entirely omitted. Again, the Second Epistle of S. Peter is regarded by many learned writers as spurious. Some reject the Apocalypse, and others hold that the Epistles of S. James and S. Jude are not authentic.¹

The general history of the canon of the New Testament is a vast subject, far beyond the scope of this work. All that will be attempted here is to present a mere outline of the history of the canon, and of the more important evidence respecting it.

When the apostles commenced their mission, there was not, we have already said, any New Testament. The very idea of a supplement to the Old Testament did not exist.

Even the Old Testament was not usually so called in that age.² The sacred books of the Jews were designated 'the Law and the Prophets and the Writings,' or 'the Law and the Prophets,' or the 'sacred writings,' or the 'Scriptures,' and

¹ Luther pronounced the Apocalypse 'to be neither apostolic nor prophetic,' and held that the Epistle of S. James was not 'the writing of any apostle.' Calvin and Erasmus and other 'reformers' disputed the authority of several of the books of the New Testament. See Westcott's *Bible in the Church*, c. 10.

² In one place S. Paul speaks of 'the reading of the Old Testament' or 'covenant' (τῆς παλαιῆς διαθήκης), 2 Cor. iii. 14. But it is not usually so designated.

this is the way in which those books are cited in the New Testament.¹

In reading the Old Testament publicly in the synagogues provision had to be made for the needs of two distinct classes of Jews—first, the Jews of Palestine and the East, who spoke the Aramaic language; secondly, the Hellenists, or Greek-speaking Jews of the West, who had settlements in every great city on the shores of the Mediterranean.

The circumstances of these two classes may be considered separately. The first class is that of the Eastern Jews, whose language at the commencement of the Christian era was no longer Hebrew, but a kindred language—the Chaldee or Aramaic. The effect of the Babylonish captivity, four hundred years before Christ, and the subsequent occupation of Palestine by the Syrians in the second century before the Christian era, was to extirpate Hebrew as a vernacular language from Judæa itself.² The people forgot their own venerable tongue and learned that of the stranger. Hebrew, however, was retained in the synagogues, where the Rabbis read portions of the Scripture and delivered addresses in that language. But side by side with the Rabbi stood the methurgeman or interpreter,³ who translated his words into a dialect with which the congregation was familiar, whether Aramaic,

¹ For example: 'All the prophets and the law prophesied until John' (Matthew xi. 13). 'The law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms' (Luke xxiv. 44). 'After the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them' (Acts xiii. 15). 'From a babe thou hast known the sacred writings' (ἱερὰ γράμματα), 2 Tim. iii. 15. Of course the sacred writings in which Timothy had been instructed were those of the Old Testament. 'Ye search the Scriptures (τὰς γραφάς) because ye think that in them ye have eternal life' (John v. 39). The Authorised Version does not give the real meaning of this passage.

² The material dates are as follows:—First, the Babylonish captivity, commenced with the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, B.C. 598, and continued until the return of many of the Jews to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel, B.C. 536. Secondly, the subsequent occupation of Palestine by the Syrians, commenced in the reign of Antiochus the Great, who died B.C. 187, and continued with some interruptions until the liberation by the Maccabees about B.C. 140.

³ In Greek ἑρμηνευτής or διερμηνευτής (1 Cor. xiv. 28). It is somewhat remarkable that the name of an office in the Jewish and Christian Churches is derived from Hermes, the fabled messenger of Greek mythology.

Greek, or Latin. Long after the people had begun to forget Hebrew it continued to be the sacred language. Several of the books of the Old Testament,¹ written after the Captivity, are in Hebrew. In the age following, Syriac or Chaldee had become the mother tongue in Babylonia and Palestine, but still the Scriptures continued to be read and the sermons to be preached in synagogues in Hebrew, and were rendered audibly into Chaldee by a methurgeman or interpreter.

This interpreter stood before the doctor who preached; the doctor whispering to him in Hebrew and he interpreting to the people in their mother tongue.² He was not allowed to write his translation lest it might be regarded as authoritative.

With regard to the oral interpretation of the Scriptures, great pains were taken to secure accuracy. For this purpose the interpretation was given verse by verse. 'He that reads the law,' says the Talmud, 'let him not read to the interpreter more than one verse at a time.'³ But so long as the substance of the text was given correctly, the methurgeman might paraphrase for better popular understanding.⁴ Certain parts of the Bible were read in Hebrew only, and for the sake of decorum were not interpreted.⁵

In Christian congregations also the interpreter was frequently required. This is evident from the instructions of S. Paul to the Church of Corinth. That city had two seaports and was a centre of commerce for the Eastern and Western world, and consequently was much frequented by foreigners. We know also that there were many Jews in it. Consequently, when people of many nationalities were gathered together in a congregation, the services of an interpreter became necessary. And to this S. Paul refers when he says to the Corinthian Christians, 'Unless ye utter by the tongue speech easy to be understood, how shall be known what is spoken?' These

¹ Viz.: Chronicles, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and nearly all the book of Ezra (Lightfoot, *Exercitations on First Epistle to Corinthians*, Addenda, c. 5).

² Lightfoot, *Hebrew Exercitations on First Epist. to Corinthians*, xiv. 2.

³ Lightfoot, Addenda to 1 Cor. xiv., citing *Bab. Megill.* fol. 23, 2.

⁴ Edersheim, *Life of Jesus*, b. iii. c. 10.

⁵ Such as the sin of Reuben (Gen. xlix. 4) and the sin of Tamar (Gen. xxxviii.).

words show the meaning of the preceding verse, 'I am willing that you should speak with tongues, but prefer that you speak plainly; for greater is he that speaks plainly than he that speaks with tongues, unless he interpret so that the congregation may receive edification.'¹

Obviously what S. Paul intends is that he does not object to speaking in foreign tongues, provided that the words are interpreted for the general instruction of the people.²

It has been conjectured by a very learned commentator on this chapter that the tongue to which S. Paul refers is Hebrew.³ Whether that conjecture be correct, it is not necessary to determine. The general scope of the passage is that when—as at Corinth—a foreign language was occasionally used, it was to be translated for the benefit of the people.

Long before the Christian era the Old Testament was translated into Greek. How far this translation was used in synagogues and Christian congregations has been a matter of much controversy. Some have contended that the Greek translation was not read even in the synagogues of the

¹ Θέλω δὲ πάντας ὑμᾶς λαλεῖν γλώσσαις, μάλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε· μέζων δὲ ὁ προφητεῖων ἢ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσσαις, ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ διερμηνεύῃ, ἵνα ἡ ἐκκλησία οἰκοδομῇ λαβῇ.—1 Cor. xiv. 5.

² The meaning of this chapter in the Epistle to the Corinthians has been strangely misunderstood. Some have thought that the apostle refers to a miraculous gift of tongues: but there is not one word about any miraculous gift. On the contrary, S. Paul is giving plain practical directions about a difficulty sure to arise among a polyglot people such as the population of Corinth. The 'Authorised' Version repeatedly uses the phrase 'unknown tongue.' There is no Greek word for 'unknown.' This mistranslation is most unfortunate, for it has given rise to an absurd notion that S. Paul referred to unintelligible sounds, or gibberish. The utterance of unmeaning noises in an assembly for public worship would be a practice which the apostle certainly would not have tolerated. Again, the Greek word translated 'prophecy' means not 'prediction,' but 'plain-speaking.' 'The προφήτης,' says Archbishop Trench, is the *out* speaker; he who speaks out the counsel of God with the clearness, energy, and authority which spring from the consciousness of speaking in God's name, and having received a direct message from Him to deliver.'—*Synonyms of the New Testament*, s. vi.

³ 'We believe that they spake Hebrew only. How necessary that language was to ministers none doubts. And hence it is that the apostle permits to speak in this (as we suppose) unknown language if an interpreter was present.'—Lightfoot, *Hebrew Exercitations on First Epistle to Corinthians*, xiv. 2.

Hellenists or Greek-speaking Jews;¹ but probably there was no hard and fast rule on the subject. It must have frequently happened that the Rabbi was not sufficiently versed in Greek to be able to address a Greek-speaking congregation in their own tongue. In other cases this difficulty would not arise. In Judæa and Babylonia we may well suppose that the Greek version was not used, for though Greek was very commonly understood, the people were more familiar with Aramaic. In Greece and Italy, on the other hand, it is at least probable that the Septuagint or Greek version gradually came into use both in the synagogues and the Christian assemblies. In the New Testament the quotations from the Old Testament are taken generally from the Septuagint.² If, then, the evangelists and apostles did not scruple to use that version, it is not probable that ministers in the Christian congregations would object to do so.³

The earliest known reference to a Greek translation of any of the books of the Old Testament occurs in a fragment of Aristobulus, who wrote about 150 years before Christ. In this passage, which is preserved in the 'Evangelical Preparation' of Eusebius and in the 'Stromata' of Clement, it is stated that 'the entire law had been first rendered into Greek under Ptolemy Philadelphus,' *i.e.* in the third century before our era.

The history of the Septuagint, or Greek version of the 'Seventy,' is very obscure. The account given by Josephus states that Ptolemy II.⁴ wrote a letter to Eleazar, the high priest at Jerusalem, stating that the king desired to procure an interpretation of the Jewish 'law' out of Hebrew into Greek to be deposited in the library at Alexandria, and requesting the high priest to select six elders out of every tribe

¹ Dr. J. Lightfoot, in his *Exercitationes on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Addenda), argues at great length that 'the Greek version was not read in the synagogues of the Hellenists; but the Hebrew text, so as it was in the synagogues of the Hebrews.'

² Some examples of quotations in the New Testament from the Septuagint will be given in a subsequent note.

³ It is clear from Josephus that at Alexandria the Septuagint was read in the synagogues (*Antiquities*, b. xiv. c. 2, s. 14).

⁴ Ptolemy II., surnamed Philadelphus, was the second of the dynasty of Greek kings in Egypt, and succeeded his father B.C. 283.

‘skilful in the laws, and of ability to make an accurate interpretation of them.’ The reply of Eleazar to this letter concludes thus: ‘We have chosen six elders out of every tribe, whom we have sent, and the law with them. It will be thy part, out of thy piety and justice, to send the law when it has been translated, and to return those to us in safety—Farewell.’¹

Josephus describes in animated language the hospitality with which they were received by the Egyptian king, and lavishly feasted and entertained for three days. The account proceeds:—

Accordingly, when three days were over, Demetrius took them and went over the causeway seven furlongs long (it was a bank in the sea) to an island.² And when they had gone over the bridge he proceeded to the northern parts and showed them where they should meet, which was within a house which was built near the shore, and was a quiet place and fit for their discourse together about their work. When he had brought them thither, he entreated them now they had all things about them that they wanted for the interpretation of their law, that they should suffer nothing to interrupt them in their work. Accordingly they made an accurate interpretation with great zeal and great pains, and this they continued to do till the ninth hour of the day, after which time they relaxed and took care of their bodies, while their food was provided for them in great plenty. Besides, Doritheus at the King’s command brought them a great deal of what was provided for the King himself. But in the morning they came to the court and saluted Ptolemy, and then went away to their former place. When they had washed their hands and purified themselves they betook themselves to the interpretation of the laws. Now when the law was transcribed and the labour of interpretation was over, which came to its conclusion in seventy-two days, Demetrius gathered all the Jews together to the place where the laws were translated, and where the interpreters were, and read them over. The multitude did also approve of those elders who were the interpreters of the law.

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, b. xii. c. 2.

² Pharos, a small island in the Bay of Alexandria. It was joined to the Egyptian shore by a causeway B.C. 284. The lighthouse built on the island was esteemed one of the wonders of the world.

This narrative is borrowed from, and in the main agrees with a 'History of the Seventy Interpreters,' said to have been written by Aristæus (or Aristeas) in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus. This work is still extant, and until the seventeenth century was generally accepted as authentic and genuine. In more modern times, however, it has been pronounced to be a forgery, written in order to enhance the authority of the Septuagint; and several eminent critics are of opinion that the whole story of the interpreters sent from Jerusalem to Alexandria is without foundation. This opinion is based on a criticism of the Septuagint itself. It is said that the style is Alexandrine, and consequently the authors of the version must have been Jews of Alexandria.¹ But there is a direct conflict of opinion on the subject, and other critics contend that the peculiarities of several passages are due, not to an Alexandrine origin, but to the traditional interpretation of the Bible which the Jews of Palestine adopted.²

According to the one theory the Septuagint is wholly the work of Palestinian, and, according to the other, of Alexandrian Jews. But it may be suggested that possibly neither theory is absolutely correct. It is at least not improbable that Ptolemy had the 'law' translated into Greek for his library, and that Alexandrian Jews were assisted by others from Jerusalem in the work.

Except on some such hypothesis it is difficult to account for the general acceptance of the Septuagint among the Jews throughout the civilised world before the Christian era. If the origin of it were purely Egyptian, without any sanction or co-operation obtained from Jerusalem, it does not seem very probable that the work would have been adopted and used—as it undoubtedly was—at Jerusalem and by Israelites generally throughout the known world.

On any supposition, however, it is most probable that the name Septuagint is derived, not from the number of translators, but from the circumstance that the work was approved by the Alexandrine Sanhedrim.

¹ Etheridge, *Apostolical Acts and Epistles from the Peshito*, p. 5.

² Edersheim, *History of the Jewish Nation*, p. 425.

The motives which induced Ptolemy to procure this translation are apparent. He was addicted to literature and learning, a patron of poets and philosophers, and devoted his strenuous efforts and much of his vast wealth to the extension of the great Alexandrian library. Added to the desire of including in that collection a version of the renowned Law of Moses, was a desire to propitiate the Jews, of whom multitudes were settled in his kingdom.¹

Josephus speaks of the interpretation of the 'law,' and it has thence been sometimes inferred that the other books of the Old Testament were not translated in the time of Ptolemy, but that a complete translation was extant long before the Christian era we have undoubted proof. In the prologue to the book Ecclesiasticus in the Apocrypha, the author, Jesus, the son of Sirach, makes a distinct reference to the translation of the 'law' and 'the prophets and the rest of the books,' from Hebrew into another tongue. And he adds that he came into Egypt in the reign of Euergetes. There were two kings of that name—one of them was Ptolemy Euergetes, who began to reign B.C. 247, and the other Ptolemy Euergetes II., who began to reign B.C. 146. Most probably it is to the first of these that Jesus, the son of Sirach, refers, but at all events he shows that a complete translation was extant in the second century before the Christian era, and probably much earlier.

Tertullian states in effect that the Ptolemaic version included all the Jewish Scriptures, and he appears to have seen the original manuscripts in the Alexandrian library. He says that Ptolemy applied to the Jews for their writings, and adds: To this day, at the temple of Serapis, the libraries of Ptolemy are to be seen with the identical Hebrew originals in them. The Jews read them publicly, for under a privilege they are in the habit of going to hear them every Sabbath.²

¹ The history of the Septuagint was in later times obscured by fables. In the *Horlatory Address to the Greeks*—attributed to Justin, but of which the authorship is very doubtful—we are told that each of the seventy translated without communication with the others, and that each miraculously gave the same translation, and that they 'failed in agreement with one another not even to the extent of one word.'

² Tertullian, *Apology*, c. 18.

The Greek version, whether completed in the reign of Ptolemy or not, was certainly completed long before the Christian era. That the translation is the work of many different translators is shown by the unequal merits of various parts of the work. Some books are rendered accurately and felicitously: in others the rendering is extremely faulty.

This version is continually cited in the New Testament.¹ The Jews, we know, regarded the Hebrew text with extreme reverence. The words and characters themselves were considered sacred, and any alteration of the text was a desecration. The Christian writers of the New Testament had not any such scruple. They quote the Septuagint freely even when it differs materially from the original Hebrew; and the translation itself they often quote rather with substantial than literal accuracy.

The differences between the quotations from the Greek and the original Hebrew are by no means merely verbal. In some cases there is a material difference in the sense of the

¹ For instance, in the genealogy given by S. Luke (iii. 35) Eber is said to be 'the son of Shelah the son of Cainan the son of Arphaxad.' This exactly agrees with the Septuagint (Genesis x. 24), which says 'Arphaxad begat Cainan, and Cainan begat Sala, and Sala begat Eber;' but in the Hebrew it is, 'Arphaxad begat Salah, and Salah begat Eber'—the name of Cainan being omitted.

Again, the following is a literal translation of the third verse of the fourteenth Psalm in the Septuagint: 'They have all turned aside, together they have become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, not so much as one. Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have deceived. The poison of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known. The fear of God is not before their eyes.'

In the Greek this agrees word for word with Romans iii. 12-18. But the fourteenth Psalm is quite different in the Hebrew and in our Authorised Version. It omits several expressions quoted by S. Paul. For instance: 'their throat is an open sepulchre' is not found in the Hebrew fourteenth Psalm, but it is found in the Hebrew fifth Psalm.

In S. Matthew xv. 9, the phrase 'But in vain do they worship Me' is found in the Septuagint version of Isaiah xxix. 13, but not in the Hebrew. Similarly, the phrase 'recovering of sight to the blind' in S. Luke iv. 17, is found in the Septuagint version of Isaiah lxi. 1, but not in the Hebrew. In Hebrews viii. 9, the Greek agrees word for word with the Septuagint, but differs materially from Jeremiah xxxi. 32 in the Hebrew.

passages quoted.¹ But not only do the New Testament writers habitually quote from the Greek version—but, beyond that, they never appear to quote from the Hebrew in preference to the Greek. Generally, of course, the Greek and the Hebrew agree, but there is no instance—it is believed—in which the Apostles or Evangelists can be shown to have taken their quotations directly from the original Hebrew.

The Septuagint with all its defects must have exercised immense influence in diffusing a knowledge of the Old Testament. Hebrew had become an almost unknown language even to the Jews of Palestine. To the vast multitudes of their brethren scattered throughout the Roman provinces it was unintelligible. In the expressive language of Tertullian, the great enterprise of Ptolemy ‘unlocked these books for all,’² and we can quite understand the cause of the joy of the Jews of Alexandria on that momentous day when those books were first read in their hearing.

This Greek version was in general use among the Christians of the West during the first and second centuries. They had no need for a Latin version, and there is no direct evidence that such a version existed in the first century.³ The oldest Latin translation of which we have any actual knowledge was probably made about the middle of the second century. At an earlier period Greek was the general language of the Church. The Apostolic Fathers wrote in Greek. It is the language of the most ancient epitaphs from the Catacombs, and of the Liturgies.

¹ For example, ‘That the residue of men may seek after the Lord,’ in Acts xv. 17, is precisely the same in sense as the Septuagint rendering of Amos ix. 12. The English Authorised Version from the Hebrew of Amos is ‘that they may possess the remnant of Edom.’

Again, in Acts xxviii. 27, S. Paul quotes Isaiah vi. 10 as follows: ‘For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed.’ This agrees verbatim with the Septuagint; but in our Authorised Version we have: ‘Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes.’ There is a wide difference of meaning here; the difference between a voluntary and a compulsory closing of the eyes and ears.

² *Apologetica*, c. 18.

³ ‘On internal grounds the existence of such a version may be plausibly supported.’—Westcott, *Bible in the Church*, c. 5.

The Septuagint therefore served to diffuse among the first Christians a knowledge of the Old Testament. But the events and doctrines of Christianity were taught orally. We are apt to overlook this important fact in estimating the early growth of the religion of Christ. Many years—probably a quarter of a century—elapsed after the Crucifixion before any book of the New Testament was written.

The order of the Gospels and the dates at which they were written have been the subjects of interminable controversy, and, in truth, we know but little with certainty on the subject. The most probable opinion is that during the first years of their mission, while they still remained at Jerusalem, the apostles were content with oral teaching, and that it was not until they were about to be dispersed that either of the Gospels was committed to writing. This is the opinion of Eusebius, whose authority on the subject is very great. He says:—‘Matthew having first proclaimed the Gospel in Hebrew, when on the point of going to other nations committed it to writing in his native tongue, and thus supplied the want of his presence to them by his writings.’¹ The apostles were still at Jerusalem, as S. Luke informs us at the time of the general council recorded in the Acts of the Apostles—that is, twenty years after the Crucifixion—and it is almost certain that all the Canonical Gospels are of a later date.

The Gospel, then, was in the first instance oral. The apostles witnessed by word of mouth to the facts of the life of Christ. Their preaching was mainly of a historical character, as we learn from several places in the Acts of the Apostles, that is to say, they occupied themselves principally with narrating the incidents and events of the life of Christ. It appears that many of their zealous hearers committed to writing much of what they heard, long before the Canonical or accepted Gospels were written. That these primitive

¹ *Eccl. Hist.* b. iii. c. 24. The most ancient testimony to this fact is that of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, at the beginning of the second century. In a passage from his writings preserved by Eusebius (*Eccl. Hist.* b. iii. c. 39) he says: ‘Matthew composed his history in the Hebrew dialect; and every one translated it as he was able.’ By ‘Hebrew’ is here meant the Chaldee or Aramaic, which is often so called by early writers.

memoirs were numerous we have undoubted proof in the preface to S. Luke's Gospel—a very interesting passage, which does not always receive due attention. S. Luke says in the dedication to his friend Theophilus:—

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word delivered them unto us—it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in an orderly manner,¹ most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of the narratives in which thou hast been instructed by word of mouth.²

S. Luke says here that 'many' have essayed to write down matters which had been 'delivered' or stated or preached by eye-witnesses and ministers. This shows beyond question that the first preaching of the apostles was committed to writing by many of their hearers. It is clear also that S. Luke was not satisfied with the accuracy of these records, for he goes on to say that he himself 'traced the course of all things accurately from the first,' and he thought it desirable to write a consecutive narrative, so that his friend might possess a correct record of matters respecting which hitherto he had been instructed by word of mouth only.

The Gospel of S. Mark in like manner was derived from oral information. Of this gospel the most ancient account now extant is that of Papias, who was bishop of Hierapolis very early in the second century, and therefore must have been born in the lifetime of some of the apostles. Papias had conversed with two of the daughters of the Apostle Philip, was a hearer of two of the actual disciples of Christ—Aristion and John the Presbyter,³ and lived so near the Apostolic age, and was so diligent in collecting information respecting

¹ *καθεξῆς*, consecutively, one after the other.

² It is submitted that this is a correct translation of the words *περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν*. The word *λόγων* here seems to mean discourses or oral narratives: and *κατηχήθης* certainly means taught by word of mouth. From *κατηχέω* we have 'catechism' and 'catechist.'

³ Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. iii. c. 39.

the lives and doctrines of the apostles, that his testimony is of the highest value.¹ His account of the origin of the Gospel of S. Mark is very interesting. After stating that he had been diligent to obtain direct information from Aristion and the Presbyter John, disciples of the Lord, Papias adds:—

And John the Presbyter said this: Mark, being the interpreter of Peter, wrote with great accuracy whatsoever he recorded, but not however in the order in which it was spoken or done by our Lord; but, as before said, he was in company with Peter, who gave him such instruction as was necessary, but not to give a history of our Lord's discourses. Wherefore Mark has not erred in anything by writing some things as he has recorded them; for he was carefully attentive to one matter—not to pass by anything that he heard or to state anything falsely in these accounts.²

The human memory is fallible, and therefore unwritten tradition, however scrupulously preserved, was inevitably liable to error. Hence the necessity for written records of Christian doctrine was soon felt. But the existence of such documents did not immediately supersede traditional teaching. The two systems of instruction were maintained for some time side by side, with the authority of the apostles themselves. Thus S. Paul exhorts the Thessalonians, 'So then, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions³ which ye were taught whether by word or by epistle of ours,' and he praises the Corinthians because 'Ye remember me in all things and hold the traditions as I delivered them to you.'⁴

The oral teaching of the apostles was naturally regarded by the early Christians with reverence and affection. They treasured the spoken gospel, and delivered it from father to

¹ Eusebius, it is true, condemns his opinions about the Millennium, and on that account calls him a man of small mind. Eusebius, however, by no means impugns his veracity, but, on the contrary, quotes his testimony with respect. Papias is quoted with deference by Irenæus, *Hæc.* v. 33.

² This extract from a lost treatise by Papias is preserved by Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.* b. iii. c. 39. Clement of Alexandria—writing about a century later than Papias—also states that S. Mark wrote his gospel from the instructions of S. Peter, and that the apostle gave his authority that this gospel should be read in churches.—Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.* b. ii. c. 15.

³ τὰς παραδόσεις (2 Thess. ii. 15), matters transmitted either orally or in writing.

⁴ 1 Cor. xi. 2.

son as something unspeakably precious. Thus Papias, to whom reference has just now been made, though he was not a hearer of the apostles themselves, was intimately acquainted with those who had heard them, and diligently sought from them instruction as to their unwritten words. This very early writer in a remarkable passage, quoted in a previous chapter, says:—

If I met with anyone who had been a follower of the elders anywhere, I made a point to inquire what were the declarations of the elders; what was said by Andrew, Peter, or Philip; what by Thomas, James, John or Matthew, or any other of the disciples of the Lord; what was said by Aristion and the Presbyter John, disciples of the Lord; for I do not think I derived so much benefit from books as from the living voice of those that are still surviving.¹

There is something deeply impressive in these reminiscences of one who had conversed with companions of Christ and the apostles. In the same sense, Polycarp, who was instructed by apostles, and had talked with many who had seen Christ, beseeches Christians to avoid false doctrines, and to adhere 'to the word which has been handed down to us from the beginning.'²

Even so late as the close of the second century—long after the Church was in possession of gospels and epistles, universally regarded as canonical—the same affection for the oral traditions of Christianity continued. Clement of Alexandria speaks of the diligence with which he sought out men who possessed this knowledge, and adds—

These men preserved the true tradition of the salutary doctrine which, as given by Peter and James, John and Paul, had descended from father to son. Though there are few like their fathers, they have by the favour of God also come down to us to plant that ancient and apostolic seed likewise in our minds.³

It is easy to understand this long continued veneration of

¹ *Ante*, chap. xiii.

² Polycarp's *Epistle to the Philippians*, c. 7.

³ Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* b. v. c. 11, quoting the 'Stromata' of Clement.

oral teaching. From the necessity of the case, that was the mode in which the first disciples had been taught. It was the preaching of the apostles which convinced them. Naturally, therefore, they loved the spoken word and taught their children to reverence it.¹

It must not be inferred, however, that the primeval Christians undervalued written documents. On the contrary, they esteemed them as precious depositories—though not the sole depositories—of Christian doctrine, and diligently read them in their congregations.

To the practice of reading publicly the epistles there are frequent references in the New Testament. To the Colossians S. Paul says, 'When this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read in the Church of the Laodiceans, and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea.' He gives similar directions to the Thessalonians, 'I adjure by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the brethren.'²

As the written gospels were supplemental to oral teaching, so also were the Apostolic epistles. The churches founded by the apostles received from them letters containing instruction in matters of doctrine and discipline. The Epistles of S. Paul written to individual churches are for the most part doctrinal. His 'pastoral' epistles, as they are called—those addressed to Timothy and Titus—treat of the organisation and discipline of the churches, and the qualification of its various ministers. The Catholic epistles of other apostles are addressed, not to individual churches, but to several.

¹ 'Those who had heard the voice of the apostles,' says Dr. Westcott eloquently, 'necessarily cherished the memory of the spoken word more than the letter of the record. There is always something more direct and personal in the fruits of immediate intercourse than in the remote relationship of books. This sentiment was powerful, as we shall see, in the next generation, and with those who had seen the apostles it must have been paramount.'—Westcott, *The Bible in the Church*, c. 3.

² 'It cannot, however, be denied,' says the same writer, 'that the idea of a New Testament consisting of definite books equal in authority to the Old was foreign to the Apostolic age.' And he adds, 'The immediate successors of the apostles did not then, we fully admit, perceive that the written memoirs of the Lord and the scattered writings of His first disciples would form a sure and sufficient source or test of doctrine when the current tradition had grown indistinct or corrupt.'—*The Bible in the Church*, c. 3.

² Col. iv. 16; 1 Thess. v. 27.

From the first, these compositions were regarded with the utmost reverence. But there is no reason to suppose that all the letters written by apostles, either to churches or individuals, have been preserved. Certainly there is no statement or suggestion to that effect, either in the New Testament or in early Christian writers. Indeed, in one instance we have direct proof of the loss of an epistle of S. Paul. Writing to the Corinthian Church he says, 'I wrote to you in the epistle not to associate with fornicators.'¹ The epistle here mentioned is no longer extant.

The practice of reading publicly the Gospels and Apostolic epistles prevailed from the time when they were written. Of this there cannot be any reasonable doubt. But other writings of less authority were also read in the congregations. Thus the genuine epistle of Clement, Bishop of Rome, was 'publicly read for the common benefit in most of the churches.'² Similarly, in a letter addressed to Soter, Bishop of Rome, by Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, in the second century he says, 'To-day we have passed the Lord's holy day, in which we have read your epistle; in reading which we shall always have our minds stored with admonition, as we shall also from that written to us before by Clement.'³

But documents such as these, though valued and read for 'admonition,' stood in a very different rank from the Apostolic writings. The crucial test to which all writings admitted

¹ Ἐγραψα ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι πόρνοις, 1 Cor. v. 9. And then the apostle goes on to say 'but now I write unto you not to keep company if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator,' evidently making a distinction between what he writes 'now' and what he wrote formerly. The learned Dr. John Lightfoot, having a preconceived opinion that all the epistles ought to have been preserved, has an extraordinary way of accounting for this expression. He supposes that Timothy was despatched to Corinth with the epistle now missing, but that 'Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus coming to the apostle and laying open the whole state of the Church of Corinth to him, and bringing him letters and questions from the church when, as they knew, Timothy was not arrived at Corinth, he suppresses that epistle and comprises it in this' - *Exercitations on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. This theory of the suppression of one epistle and the substitution of another is purely imaginary, and is only one of the many instances in which even learned theologians invent history to suit their theology.

² Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. iii. c. 16.

³ *Ib.* b. iv. c. 23.

into the Canon were subjected was this, that they were deemed to be written by apostles or by their authority. Two Gospels were accepted as the writings of the Apostles Matthew and John. Two others were believed to be sanctioned by the Apostles Peter and Paul. So also with regard to the epistles. There was no doubt, for instance, that S. Paul was the author of the epistles which bore his name; and the Epistle to the Hebrews was received into the Canon, because it was considered to have been written either by him or with his authority.

The expression 'New Testament,' however, did not come into use until the latter part of the second century, and the first instance of the use of the word 'Canon' to express an authentic collection of Christian scriptures appears to be in the writings of Tertullian, when he says that the 'Pastor' of Hermas is not included in the 'Divine Canon.'¹

With regard to the origin of this Canon, there are, obviously, two distinct questions—How was it formed? When was it formed?

As to the first question we may state negatively that the Canon was not settled by any general council or assembly of the Church. No such council was held until the fourth century, and the Canon—as we shall presently show—was substantially settled long before that period.

We shall search in vain for any decree or public utterance of the whole church of the earlier centuries, which gives a list of canonical books of the New Testament. The agreement of the various churches on this all important point was arrived at by a method of mutual consultation in local synods, of which the records have been lost. That such councils were held is clear from the passage from Tertullian just cited. He says that the 'Pastor' of Hermas is not included in

ivine Canon,' but has been 'habitually judged by every council of churches, even your own, to be apocryphal and false.'

This instructive passage shows clearly the steps by which the agreement of Christendom respecting the canon was arrived at. It is another valuable illustration also of the

¹ *De Pudicitia*, c. 10.

unity and catholicity of the Church from its very beginning. Widely scattered as were the Christian communities, there was a substantial consensus of opinion among them as to matters of faith and practice. With reference to the canon this agreement was obtained by mutual consultation: and the deliberations of their earliest synods were aided by the recollection of those who had known the apostles, or their immediate successors and disciples.

To the second question—when was the Canon settled?—it is not possible to give a concise answer; for with respect to some portions of the New Testament there have been controversies for ages, and those controversies are not even now determined. On the other hand, by far the greater number of books of the New Testament have been accepted as canonical from the time when they were written. S. Paul's epistles, for instance, authenticated by his own handwriting,¹ were received with reverence by the churches to which they were addressed, and forthwith circulated among the neighbouring churches.²

The history of the canon of the New Testament has been the subject of endless debate. Every possible question respecting the origin of the books of which it is composed—their authenticity, date, text, and the circumstances in which they were written—has been discussed in innumerable volumes, tracts, and essays. The literature of the subject is enormous. Only the shelves of a great public library could contain it all, and it may safely be asserted that no human being ever read one half of it.³

¹ The salutation of me, Paul, with my own hand' (1 Cor. xvi. 21). 'The salutation of me, Paul, with my own hand, which is the token in every epistle' (2 Thess. iii. 17). 'See with how large letters I have written unto you with my own hand' (Galatians vi. 11). (Mistranslated in the Authorised Version.)

² 'And when this epistle has been read among you cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea' (Coloss. iv. 16).

³ Dr. Van Oosterzee, in his lectures on S. John's Gospel, gives a list of upwards of sixty treatises written during the first half of the present century on the history of that gospel alone.

All that can be attempted here is to give a few of the more important and interesting particulars respecting the formation of the canon. The evidence for the canonicity of the several books is of two kinds—first, direct and express mention of them by ancient writers; secondly, quotations from them by ancient writers in such a manner as to imply that they were received as genuine Scriptures. The latter of these topics is so extensive, that it could not be adequately discussed within the limits of the present work. But of direct historical notices of the books of the New Testament something may be said—though necessarily only a brief summary of the more important particulars can be attempted.

In the first place, it may be observed that there are accounts of the origin of the Synoptic Gospels—those which bear the names of SS. Matthew, Mark, and Luke—which are generally received as trustworthy.

S. Matthew.—The popular language of Judæa in the Apostolic age was the Aramaic, a form of Hebrew; and ancient writers agree that the Gospel of S. Matthew was written in this dialect. Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, who suffered martyrdom about the year 165, in a passage already quoted, says: ‘Matthew composed the oracles in the Hebrew dialect, and each interpreted them as he could.’¹

This is very strong evidence; for Papias was a companion of Polycarp, ‘a man who had been instructed by the apostles, and had familiar intercourse with many who had seen Christ,’² and a ‘direct hearer’ of the Presbyter John, who was contemporary with some of the apostles. Papias therefore had abundant means of information upon the subject before us. Moreover, he states that he was diligent to obtain information from the apostles and other disciples of Christ. It is not probable, therefore, that this Bishop of Hierapolis was misinformed on such an important point as the origin of the Gospels. The statement of Papias is confirmed by Eusebius, who says:—

Matthew, having formerly preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to others also, having committed his Gospel

¹ Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. iii. c. 39.

² *Ib.* b. iv. c. 14.

to writing in his native tongue, and thus supplied the want of his presence to them by his writings.¹

Eusebius does not state precisely the source from which he derives his information, but he is so careful in his statements respecting the canonical writings, that there is no reason to distrust his testimony.

S. Jerome actually saw an ancient Hebrew copy of the Gospel, which was preserved in the library of Cæsarea, and transcribed another copy preserved at Berea. He says :—

Matthew, who was also called Levi, from a publican made an apostle, first of all in Judæa composed the Gospel of Christ in Hebrew letters and words for their sakes who were of the circumcision and believed. It is not sufficiently known who translated it subsequently into Greek. However, that very Hebrew Gospel is preserved to this day in the library at Cæsarea, which Pamphilus the martyr with much care collected. I also had leave given me by the Nazarenes, who use this book in Berea, a city of Syria, to write it out.

This is conclusive evidence that this gospel was originally composed in the native tongue of the apostle, the Aramaic (which in this passage, as in the New Testament, is called Hebrew), and was subsequently translated into Greek.

S. Mark.—There is ample evidence that the Gospel of S. Mark was founded on the teaching of the Apostle Peter. Papias, who, for reasons already stated, is a thoroughly trustworthy authority, says this on the authority of John the Presbyter, who was contemporary of some of the apostles. The passage has been quoted in a previous page.

Clement of Alexandria, who was born about the middle of the second century, and who was therefore somewhat later than Papias, gives an account of this gospel, which differs somewhat from that of Papias, but is not inconsistent with it. Referring to the effects of S. Peter's preaching, Clement says :—

So greatly, however, did the splendour of piety enlighten the minds of Peter's hearers that it was not sufficient to hear

¹ Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.* b. iii. c. 39.

but once, nor to receive the unwritten doctrine of the Gospel of God, but they persevered with various entreaties to solicit Mark, as the companion of Peter, and whose Gospel we have, that he should leave them a monument in writing of the doctrine thus orally communicated. Nor did they cease their solicitations until they had prevailed with this man, and thus became the means of the history which is called the Gospel according to Mark. They say also that the apostle, having ascertained what was done by the revelation of the Spirit, was delighted with the zealous ardour of these men, and that the history obtained his authority for the purpose of being read in churches.¹

Other writers who lived so near the Apostolic age that it is not possible that they could have been misinformed on such a subject, give the same account of the origin of S. Mark's Gospel. Thus Irenæus, who became Bishop of Lyons in Gaul (A.D. 177), calls Mark the 'disciple and interpreter of Peter,' and Tertullian expressly states that Mark wrote his gospel from the information of Peter.² There cannot be any reasonable doubt that this statement is correct, and that the evangelist composed his gospel from the oral teaching of the Apostle Peter.

S. Luke.—The origin of S. Luke's Gospel is similar to that of S. Mark. As the one faithful disciple and follower recorded the instructions of the Apostle Peter, so the other recorded those of the Apostle Paul. We know that S. Luke was the constant companion of the Apostle of the Gentiles in his numerous journeys, and it is natural to suppose that he would be anxious to preserve in writing the teaching of his master.

We have the express and thoroughly trustworthy testimony of Irenæus that the third gospel originated in this manner. He says, 'Luke the companion of Paul committed to writing the gospel preached by him.'³ In the Muratorian

¹ Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. ii. c. 15. In another place Clement (according to Eusebius, b. vi. c. 14) says that Peter 'neither hindered nor encouraged' the composition of the Gospel of S. Mark. It has been said that this statement is not consistent with that above quoted; but there is no real inconsistency. It might well be that S. Peter did not in the first instance encourage the composition of this gospel, but afterwards gave it his approval.

² Irenæus, *Hær.* i. 1; Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* iv. ³ *Ib. Adv. Hær.* iii. I. i.

Fragment, of which an account will be given hereafter, we have the evidence of a writer who lived in the middle of the second century. He says, 'In the third place is the book of the Gospel according to Luke. Luke was that physician whom, being zealous of right, Paul after the ascension of Christ took with him as a companion. He wrote in his own name from report'¹ (as he did not himself see the Lord in the flesh), and thus was able to trace His course. Thus he begins to speak from the nativity of John.' Other ancient though somewhat later writers agree that S. Luke derived his information from the apostles, and mainly from S. Paul; and the statement has been accepted in all ages without dispute.

S. John.—The history of the fourth gospel has in modern times been the subject of much controversy; but it may safely be asserted that the earliest Christian writers, without a single exception, regarded this gospel as the undoubted work of the Apostle John.

We will first notice the positive historical testimony to the authenticity of the gospel, and then to the recent theories on the subject.

Several writers of the highest repute, who lived in widely distant parts of the world in the second century, expressly attribute the fourth gospel to the Apostle John.

Irenæus, who became Bishop of Lyons in Gaul in the year 170, and who therefore was born probably less than fifty years after the decease of the apostle, says:—

That Gospel according to John relates His original, effectual, and glorious generation from the Father, thus declaring, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'²

In another section of the same chapter he again quotes the first chapter of the gospel, and again attributes it to S. John.

¹ *Ex opinione*, from report, or relation. That this is the meaning of the phrase seems to be shown from what follows: 'as he did not himself see the Lord in the flesh.' Further on, the writer seems to contrast this narrative of S. Luke with that of S. John, an actual eye-witness of what he records.

Cicero uses *opinio* in the sense of a report or rumour. *Opinionem afferunt populo.*—*De Officiis*, b. ii. c. 13.

² *Adv. Hæc.* iii. c. 11, s. 2.

John himself puts this matter beyond controversy on one point when he says, 'He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.'¹

Irenæus has some fanciful comparisons of the four gospels to natural objects, thus:—

Since there are four zones of the world in which we are and four universal winds, and the Church is scattered over the whole earth, and the Gospel is the pillar and support of the Church and the breath of life, by analogy it should have four pillars breathing immortality on all sides and renewing the life of men.

And then he goes on to describe the four gospels, styling them by the names of the four evangelists. It must be allowed that these analogies of Irenæus are fanciful and far fetched; but that does not in the least degree affect his testimony to the fact that in his day the four gospels were universally received by the Church.

There is not one ancient Christian writer who suggests any doubt as to the authenticity of the Gospel of S. John. And therefore, in the total absence of conflicting evidence, that of Irenæus would alone suffice to show that the gospel was universally recognised as the work of the apostle. We must bear in mind who Irenæus was, and what were his means of knowledge. He was the Bishop of an important diocese, and venerated by the whole Church. In his youth he had been a disciple of Polycarp, who had been taught by the Apostle John himself; and many of the lessons which Polycarp had learned from his revered master, he must have communicated in turn to his own disciple. Is it credible that such a momentous subject as the composition of a gospel by S. John was omitted? or that Irenæus would assert that S. John had written such a gospel, unless he had received assurance of that fact from Polycarp?

But the evidence does not stop here. On the contrary, the proofs of the authorship of the fourth gospel are more abundant than those of the other three.

¹ *Adv. Hær.* iii. c. 11, s. 8.

Clement of Alexandria, who is described by Eusebius as 'devoted to the study of the Scriptures,' is another witness of the second century. In his 'Institutions,' he critically examines the canon of the New Testament, and speaking of the order of the gospels, he says:—

But John, last of all, perceiving that in the gospels corporeal things were declared, and being encouraged by his familiar friends and urged by the Spirit, wrote a spiritual gospel.¹

The contrast here drawn between the Fourth Gospel and the earlier or Synoptic Gospels is very remarkable—in them what related to things corporeal—the external events of Christ's life—being sufficiently narrated. S. John furnished a supplement to these—a 'spiritual' gospel, treating principally of matters of doctrine.

Another witness is the eloquent Tertullian. In his treatise against Marcion, who maintained heretical doctrines, and rejected parts of the extant gospels which were repugnant to them, Tertullian says:—

In the first place, we lay it down that the Evangelical Instrument has for its authors the apostles, to whom this office of preaching the gospel was committed by the Lord Himself. It has also apostolic men, not as alone, but in company with apostles and after apostles. For the preaching of disciples might have been suspected if it were not supported by the authority of masters, nay, of Christ Himself, who made the apostles masters. In fine, the Apostles John and Matthew implant the faith, Luke and Mark renew it, starting from the same principles so far as relates to the one God the Creator, and His Christ born of the Virgin to fulfil the law and the prophets.²

In his treatise against Praxeas, Irenæus devotes five long chapters to a minute analysis of S. John's Gospel, in order to

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* b. vi. c. 14. The word for corporeal things is *σωματικά*.

² *Adv. Marc.* iv. 2. Considering that Irenæus, Tertullian, and Epiphanius describe Marcion's Gospel as a mutilated version of S. Luke's; the preposterous modern theory that S. Luke's Gospel is founded on that of Marcion does not deserve serious refutation.

show the divinity of Christ, and prefaces this analysis with the words:—

First of all there comes at once to hand the preamble of S. John to his Gospel, which shows what He previously was who had to become flesh. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.¹

Another strong proof of the general acceptance of the Gospel of S. John is derived from the Peshito, or Syriac version of the Bible, which work was completed at Edessa in the second century.² It includes all the four gospels and nearly all the other books of our present New Testament.

The celebrated Muratorian Fragment, of which an account will be given presently, is a translation of a Greek document written in the middle of the second century. If the author when he wrote was a middle-aged man, he must have been born only a few years after the decease of the Apostle John. Of the fourth gospel this document gives the following account:—

The fourth gospel is that of John, one of the disciples. His fellow disciples and bishops exhorting him [to write] he said: Let us fast for three days, and let us relate to each other whatever is revealed to either of us. In the same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the apostles, that John should describe all things in his own name.

The historical value of this statement is not impaired by the reference to a 'revelation,' which may possibly have been a dream. But the fact remains that a writer who lived shortly after the Apostolic age speaks of the fourth gospel as an extant work, and associates it with other works generally accepted by the Church.

The last piece of evidence which we shall adduce would be absolutely conclusive, even if it stood alone. Tatian, a disciple of Justin Martyr, wrote in the second century his *Diatessaron*, or *Harmony of the Four Gospels* (*εὐαγγέλιον διὰ τεσσάρων*), of which an ancient translation has been recently discovered.

¹ *Adv. Píaxan*, c. 21.

² Dr. Westcott thinks the Peshito was completed 'early in the second century' (*Bible in the Church*, c. 5). Critics are for the most part agreed that it is a work of the second century (Sanday, *The Gospels in the Second Century*, c. 13).

This compilation, which was extensively used in churches, is sufficient proof that the four gospels were accepted as canonical.

There is another entirely different kind of evidence of the currency of S. John's Gospel—the frequent quotations from it by the early Fathers; but this evidence is here omitted for the sake of brevity. We confine ourselves to distinct statements of writers of the second century, who mention S. John by name as the author of this work. And it should be carefully observed that these are not obscure writers, but men of learning, illustrious by their position, venerated by the whole Church. Irenæus, the Primate of the Church of Gaul; Clement, the head of the great Alexandrian school of theology; Tertullian, the most erudite of the Latin Fathers. It is idle to suppose that these are not the witnesses of truth.

Besides that, their lives were passed in regions so widely sundered that they could not have been exponents of a merely local belief. Clement was an Athenian by birth, and his early life was spent in Greece and his later life in Alexandria. Irenæus was probably a native of Asia Minor, and migrated to Lyons, and became the head of the Gallican Church. The scene of the labours of Tertullian was Carthage. These three writers therefore represent the belief of Christendom from East to West.

It is not contended that the authorship of the fourth gospel was a matter within their own personal knowledge. They did not actually see S. John write it, but their testimony is almost as strong as if they had done so. What they say is this: that the Christians of their day universally received this gospel as the genuine work of the apostle. Among those Christians were many whose fathers had been contemporary with him, and some who were born before he died. If an attempt were made to foist a spurious work into the canon of the New Testament, these men must have denounced it as a forgery. Supposing the work to have been published after the death of the apostle, it must have been a novelty to some of these men, and they would have instantly condemned the impudent imposture.¹

¹ The pool or reservoir of Bethesda with its five porches, and the sheep-gate or market, were in existence when this gospel was written. This appears

Now let us see what is opposed to all this testimony. The authenticity of S. John's Gospel remained undoubted until the close of the last century, when the notable discovery was made that a work, which the Church had seventeen hundred years uninterruptedly accepted as genuine, was not the work of S. John, but was written long after his death! The arguments in favour of this conclusion are based entirely on internal evidence. It is not pretended that there is any historical evidence that the Gospel attributed to S. John was not written by him. Not one syllable can be cited from the works of any ancient writer which suggests a doubt on the subject. But it is said that there are discrepancies between this gospel and the other three, which show that it could not have been written in the lifetime of the apostle.

That the fourth gospel differs materially in its character from the others cannot be denied. But this peculiarity is not an argument for distrust of its genuineness, but precisely the contrary. If we believe the ancient writers who lived nearest to the age of S. John, his narrative was intended to be a supplement. The bishops and priests over whom he presided perceived that the other gospels dealt mainly with the external facts, and implored S. John to record more of the doctrine and discourses of his Master. Accordingly we find that this gospel, far more fully than the rest, reports the words of Christ.

There is, it is said, a want of harmony between the narrative of the fourth gospel and those of the other three. But it is quite clear that the fourth gospel assumes the existence of those that were written previously. They dwell principally on events that occurred in Galilee; the fourth gospel on events that occurred in Jerusalem. Accordingly we find that, when

from the following passage: 'Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches' (S. John v. 2). The verb is in the present tense; but the demolition of the city by Titus was so complete that it is highly improbable that these porches and the sheep market escaped destruction. This passage, therefore, affords strong internal evidence that it was written before the fall of Jerusalem.

Dr. Lightfoot thinks the five porches were covered places, in which the people laid their clothes before going into the water (*Exercitations on S. John*, v. 2).

the writer mentions incidents of Christ's life and mission in Galilee, he passes over them very briefly, as though they were already familiar to his readers.¹

The fourth gospel narrates events respecting which the others are silent; it omits others which they record. It gives at length discourses of Christ which the synoptists do not mention. But it does not follow that this gospel is spurious. It is a supplement, and that circumstance sufficiently explains the omissions and additions. If, indeed, we could find in it contradictions² of the other evangelists, there would be some ground for saying that it is spurious and the invention of later times.

Again, it is said that the Gospel according to S. John gives to Christ attributes which are not given to Him by the others. But they also speak of Christ as the Son of God. The passages in which this title is assumed by Christ or given to Him by others are numerous.³ Undoubtedly the attributes of Christ are more fully dwelt upon by S. John than by the synoptists. But that is precisely what might be expected in a writer whose principal object was doctrine rather than narrative. In fact, the whole difference in this respect, between S. John and the other evangelists, is well expressed by the statement of Clement of Alexandria, already quoted, that S. John wrote a 'spiritual' gospel.

They who object to this gospel rely on theoretical argu-

¹ *Exempli gratia*: 'After this He went down to Capernaum, He, and His mother, and His brethren, and His disciples: and they continued there not many days' (S. John ii. 12). Christ's visit to Capernaum is described at great length by S. Matthew xi. *et seq.* It is obvious that S. John does not repeat this account because it had been narrated already. Many other instances to the same effect might be cited.

² The only instance in which actual contradiction is alleged appears to be a passage, from which it is inferred that the Crucifixion took place on the day of the Passover, and not, as the synoptists say, on the day following. 'They themselves,' says S. John, 'went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover' (xviii. 27). This has been fully considered in a previous chapter of this book.

³ 'Of a truth Thou art the Son of God' (S. Matt. xiv. 33). 'Tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said' (S. Matt. xxvi. 63). 'The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God' (S. Mark i. 1). Also, 'that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God' (S. Luke i. 35).

ments. Historical proofs they have absolutely none. The work does not accord with their preconceived ideas. The Christ depicted by S. John is not such as they would have Him; *ergo*, He was not so depicted by S. John. Stripped of enormously prolix verbiage, this is the argument of the 'advanced' critics, as they are arrogantly called.

To these hypotheses are opposed the sober testimony of those who lived nearest to the Apostolic age, that the Gospel according to S. John was universally accepted by the Church as a genuine work; and those who prefer history to theory and fact to speculation will conclude that, on this momentous question, the early Church was not mistaken.

The earliest known list of the books of the New Testament is contained in a manuscript called the Muratorian Canon or Muratorian Fragment. This remarkable document is preserved in the Ambrosian Library at Milan,¹ and derives its name from the learned Muratori, by whom it was discovered. Muratori was the librarian of the Ambrosian Collection at the commencement of the seventeenth century, and a most voluminous historical writer and compiler.²

The manuscript was formerly in the library of the ancient Irish monastery of S. Columbarius at Bobbio in Piedmont. That collection was dispersed among the libraries of Milan, the Vatican, and Turin, and in this way Milan became possessed of the Muratorian Fragment.

Muratori has given an account of his discovery in the third volume of his '*Antiquitates Italicae*.' He says that this codex appears, from the character of the writing, to belong to the eighth century. The contents are very miscellaneous, consisting of various homilies and tracts which have been transcribed by very illiterate copyists. After giving the titles of some of these, Muratori proceeds:—

From the same codex I have culled a most ancient fragment

¹ The present writer, having carefully examined this precious document, can testify to the readiness with which it is exhibited by the courteous officers of the library to visitors.

² *Inter alia*, he published '*Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*' in twenty-eight folio volumes, and '*Antiquitates Italicae*' in six folio volumes.

relating to the canon of the divine Scriptures. I have not spared any pains to discover the author and to ascertain whether it has ever before been edited. Unless my eyes have deceived me or the defects of books, which I repeatedly regret, I have never seen it published, and I entertain the hope that it will be the more readily received by readers, especially as it exhibits the most venerable antiquity.

Muratorì proceeds to show that the date of the original, from which the manuscript was copied or translated, must be the middle of the second century. This is inferred from the following passage :—

‘Hermas wrote “The Shepherd” very recently in our own times, in the city of Rome, while his brother, Bishop Pius, occupied the chair of the Church of Rome.’ It is well known that Hermas lived about A.D. 150.

It is now ascertained, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the fragment is a rude, illiterate translation of a Greek original, the author of which is not known. The errors of grammar and spelling are great and many. Every sentence abounds with gross blunders, which show that the writer had very vague ideas of Latin syntax and orthography, and yet it has been well remarked : ‘Its evidence is not the less trustworthy, from its being a blundering and illiterate transcript, or a rough and rustic translation of a Greek original. The peculiarity of its transmission in this form gives, if anything, a further weight to its testimony, as being something the genuineness of which is self-evident.’¹

But though the fragment is full of errors, the general sense of it is tolerably clear. It begins abruptly in the middle of a sentence. The following translation is believed to be substantially, though not always literally correct. The translation—for convenience of reference—is divided into paragraphs, though there are no such divisions in the Latin.

. . . . At which he was present and thus set them down.

¹ *Canon Muratoriannus*, by Dr. Tregelles (I. s. 4). This most valuable edition gives a facsimile of the manuscript and a profoundly erudite commentary upon it. Dr. Tregelles (III. s. 16) thinks the date of the Greek original is A.D. 160, or earlier.

In the third place is the book of the Gospel according to Luke. Luke was that physician, zealous of right, whom Paul took with him as a companion after the ascension of Christ. Luke wrote in his own name from report¹ (as he did not himself see the Lord in the flesh), and he thus was able to trace his course. Thus he begins to speak from the nativity of John.

The fourth gospel is that of John, one of the disciples.² His fellow disciples and bishops exhorting him [to write it] he said, Let us fast for three days, and let us relate to each other whatever is revealed to either of us. In the same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the apostles, that John should describe all things in his own name. And thus, though various principles are taught in the several books of the gospels, there is no difference to the faith of believers. In one general purpose all things are declared of the Nativity, the Passion, the Resurrection, the discourse with the disciples, and the two Advents—the first when He was despised in His humility, the second when He will be glorious in His royal power. What wonder, then, that John so constantly asserts these things in his epistles, saying, What we have seen with our eyes and our hands have touched, these we write unto you.³ He professes himself to be not only a seer and hearer, but also a writer in order of all the wonderful things of the Lord.

But the Acts of all the Apostles are written in one book. Luke [writing] to the most excellent Theophilus includes only those things which occurred in his own presence, as he shows by omitting the passion of Peter and the departure of Paul from Rome for Spain.⁴

But the Epistles of Paul, what they were, from what place directed, or for what cause, they themselves declare to those who are willing to understand.

¹ *Ex opinione*—from the report or narration of others. This meaning of the phrase is noticed in a former note of this chapter.

² In his Gospel S. John habitually styles himself 'disciple.'

³ 1 Epistle John i. 7. So in S. John xix. 35: 'And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true.' This contrast between S. John's narrative—that of an eye-witness—and that of S. Luke, derived from the information of others, is very remarkable.

⁴ This is apparently the general sense of the barbarous Latin: '*Sicut et semote passionem petri declarat. Sed et pauli ab urbe ad spaniam proficiscentis.*'

First of all to the Corinthians, forbidding the schism of heresy.

Then, secondly, to the Galatians [forbidding] circumcision.

To the Romans he wrote at great length, showing by the order of the Scriptures that Christ was the first principle of them; of all which things it is necessary for us to discourse.

Since the blessed apostle Paul, following the rule of his predecessor¹ John, wrote only to seven churches by name in this order—firstly, to the Corinthians; secondly, to the Ephesians; thirdly, to the Philippians; fourthly, to the Colossians; fifthly, to the Galatians; sixthly, to the Thessalonians; seventhly, to the Romans (but he wrote twice to the Corinthians and Thessalonians for the purpose of correction)—he showed that there is only one church scattered throughout the whole world. For John in the Apocalypse, although he writes to seven churches, speaks to all.

But one to Philemon and one to Titus and two to Timothy, written from love and affection, are held sacred in the honour of the Catholic Church in the regulation of ecclesiastical discipline.

It is reported also that there is an epistle to the Laodiceans and another to the Alexandrians, forged in the name of Paul against the heresy of Marcion, and many others which cannot be received in the Catholic Church, for gall may not be mingled with honey.

An epistle of Jude and two of the above-named John are received in the Catholic Church. And Wisdom, written by friends of Solomon in honour of it² and the Apocalypse of

¹ Possibly the writer means that S. Paul became an apostle subsequently to S. John. It cannot be meant that S. Paul's epistles were later than the Apocalypse.

² *Et sapientia ab amicis Salomonis in honorem ipsius scripta.* This obscure passage has given rise to a multitude of conjectures. Apparently the book referred to is the Wisdom of Solomon, one of the books of the Apocrypha, which was probably written after the commencement of the Christian era. There is no known mention of this book previously, and it is mentioned both here and by Irenæus in connection with the canon of the New Testament (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* b. v. c. 8). In the second chapter of Wisdom there are clear though covert allusions to the death of Christ—not prophetically, but as a past event. He is styled the 'just man' and the 'Son of God.' The book contains a laudation of wisdom closely resembling that which occurs in the Book of Proverbs. Hence, possibly the title Wisdom of Solomon. The word here translated 'friends' does not necessarily mean 'contemporaries.' It may mean 'admirers.' For other conjectural explanations see Tregelles iii. s. 13.

John and Peter we receive, which, however, some Christians object¹ to have read in churches.

The 'Pastor,'² indeed, was written very lately in our own times by Hermas, while Bishop Pius, his brother, occupied the chair of the Church of Rome, and thus it should be read. But it cannot be read in the church publicly to the people, neither among the prophets, of whom the number is complete, nor among the apostles, because of the limit of time.

But of Arsinous or Valentine or Miltiades we receive nothing whatever. Those followers also of Marcion who have written a new book of Psalms, together with Basilides, founder of the Asian Cataphrygians. . . .

Here the Fragment ends abruptly in the middle of a sentence.³

We now proceed to consider what books of our present canon are recognised in this remarkable document. Firstly, four gospels are recognised. It is true that those of SS. Matthew and Mark are not expressly named, but this omission is obviously due to a defect of the manuscript, which commences at the top of a page in the middle of a sentence. The Gospels of SS. Luke and John are styled the 'third' and

¹ Dr. Tregelles thinks the objection here mentioned relates only to the Apocalypse of S. Peter, as the Apocalypse of S. John had been mentioned previously in the Fragment in terms which imply approval. It is not absolutely clear, however, that the objection in question does not also include the Apocalypse of S. John, which we know has been regarded as a disputed book. It is true that the word *quam*, here translated 'which,' is in the singular number; but no certain inference can be drawn from that circumstance, as the writer of the Fragment utterly disregards grammar.

² The *Pastor*, or *Shepherd* of Hermas, is a kind of religious romance abounding in allegories, which seems to have been popular among some of the early Christians. Tertullian is very severe in his condemnation of it. He calls it the pastor of adulterers ('illo apocrypho pastore mæchorum.'—*De Pudic.* 20), probably with reference to a prurient passage in it.

³ The meaning of the sentence, however, is clear. Evidently the writer goes on to say that the heretical books to which he refers ought not to be read in churches. Tertullian has devoted a treatise—*Adv. Valentinianos*—to refute the heresy of Valentinus, who denied the human nature of Christ. Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* b. v. c. 16) quotes a discourse written 'against the heresy which is called after Miltiades. Justin Martyr, and many others combated the heresy of Marcion. The book *Adversus omnes Hæreses*, which is generally included among the works of Tertullian, mentions Basilides (c. 1) and the Cataphrygians (c. 7).

'fourth,' and therefore the writer recognised the first and second gospels.

Let us next consider the epistles omitted from the Muratorian list. They appear to be five in number—the Epistle to the Hebrews, the two Epistles of S. Peter, the Epistle of S. James, and (probably) one Epistle of S. John.

The omission of the First Epistle of S. Peter by no means implies an opinion that it was not genuine, for it was always reckoned among the undisputed books. Eusebius, who was thoroughly versed in the history of the canon, and had access to documents no longer extant, includes the epistle among the books which were always acknowledged to be genuine.¹ In the second century, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian quote it by name as an Epistle of Peter.²

For the omission of this epistle from the Muratorian list various reasons may be conjectured. The cause may be simply the imperfection of the manuscript, which ends abruptly in the middle of a sentence; and possibly, if the list were complete, we should find the omission supplied. Another reason may be that the writer was not acquainted with this epistle. The Gospels and the Epistles of S. Paul were, at a very early period, collected into books which were constantly used in churches. If, as there is reason to suppose,³ the Epistle of S. Peter was not included in any such collection, but existed only as a separate treatise, it may not have come to the knowledge of the writer of the Muratorian list.

The other epistles omitted from the list are the Epistle to the Hebrews, the second of S. Peter, that of S. James, and apparently one of S. John.⁴

¹ *Hist. Eccl.* b. iii. c. 25.

² Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, iv. 9, s. 2. Clement, *Strom.* iv. 7. Tertullian *Scorp.* c. 12.

³ 'The peculiar use on the part of Tertullian of this epistle, so different from his habitual quotations from the Gospels and S. Paul's Epistles, was natural with regard to a work which existed as yet only separately, and not in either of the collections of books which were in constant use in the services of the Church' (Tregelles, *Canon Muratorianus*, p. 98).

⁴ It should be observed, however, that Dr. Tregelles considers that all three Epistles of S. John are recognised in the Fragment. He supposes that the passage *superscriptio Johannis duas in catholica habentur* refers to the second

The Epistle to the Hebrews is attributed by the earliest writers on the subject to different authors. Clement of Alexandria says that it was written in Hebrew by S. Paul, and translated into Greek by S. Luke.¹ On the other hand, Tertullian expressly states it to be the work of Barnabas, and says it was 'more received'² in the Church than the 'Pastor' of Hermas. The expression 'more received' implies that it was not universally received. The judgment of Origen in the third century is as follows:—

I would say that the thoughts are the apostle's, but the diction and phraseology belong to some one who has recorded what the apostle said, and as one who noted down at his leisure what his master dictated. If, then, any church considers this epistle as coming from Paul, let it be commended for this, for neither did those ancient men deliver it as such without cause. But who it was who really wrote this epistle God only knows. The account, however, which has been current before us is that Clement, who was Bishop of Rome, wrote the epistle. According to others, it was written by Luke, who wrote the Gospel and the Acts.³

The earliest writings now extant which refer expressly by name to the other books omitted from the Muratorian canon, are those of Origen (born about A.D. 185), and it is remarkable that he speaks in terms of some doubt with reference to every one of them. Of the second of Peter he says it is 'disputed.'⁴ That of S. James he calls the 'reputed' Epistle of S. James;⁵ of the second and third of S. John he says, 'not all agree that they are genuine'⁶ Origen was a pupil of Clement of

and third of S. John. In effect, Dr. Tregelles translates the passage thus: 'Of the above-named John's two epistles, *besides that already mentioned*, are held in the Catholic Church.' But with great deference it is submitted that there is nothing to justify the interpolation of the words '*besides that already mentioned*.' Dr. Westcott says, 'There is reason to think that two epistles of S. John, and not three, were first popularly received. The two shorter epistles may have been reckoned as one' (*Bible in the Church*, c. 5). [*Superscriptio in the Fragment is a mistake for superscripti, and duas for duæ.*]

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* b. vi. c. 14.

² 'Receptor.' Tertullian, *De Pudicitia*, c. 20.

³ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* b. vi. c. 25.

⁴ *Ib.*

⁵ ὡς ἐν τῇ φερομένῃ Ἰακώβου ἐπιστολῇ ἀγέγνωμεν (*In Johan.* xix. 4) cited, Tregelles, *Canon Muratorianus*, v. s. 4.

⁶ Eusebius, *ubi supra*.

Alexandria, and became head of the celebrated catechetical school in that city. His eminence and learning give great weight to his opinion.

It would be far beyond the scope of this work to give in detail the evidence respecting the authenticity of the books contained in the New Testament. The subject is one of extreme difficulty, and has been investigated at great length by learned theologians.¹ But a few of the most important conclusions respecting the usage and practice of the Church in the first and second centuries may be briefly stated.

1. The books universally received and acknowledged were the Four Gospels, the Acts, thirteen Epistles of S. Paul, one of S. Peter, and one of S. John.

2. In the West the Epistle of S. Jude, the second and perhaps third of S. John, and the Apocalypse were received.

3. In the East the Epistle of S. James and the Epistle to the Hebrews were generally received.

4. The Second Epistle of S. Peter alone of the books which we receive appears to have been almost or entirely unused and unknown.²

These conclusions are based partly on a minute examination of quotations by early writers from books of the New Testament, partly on express references by such writers to the books by name. In the second century there was a general, but not a complete accord between the Eastern and Western Churches respecting the canon. For instance, the Peshito or ancient Syriac version,³ which was completed early in the second century, shows what books the Eastern Christians at that time deemed canonical. This version agrees with the Muratorian Canon as to the reception of most

¹ The admirable notes of Dr. Tregelles in his *Canon Muratorianus* and Dr. Westcott's *Bible in the Church* contain in a brief compass the most important of these investigations.

² Westcott, *ubi supra*.

³ The Peshito includes the Old and New Testament in Syriac. The books of the Syriac New Testament are translated into English by Etheridge—the Gospels in his *Syrian Churches*, and the other books in his *Apostolical Acts and Epistles*. In the latter there is a valuable account of ancient translations of the Bible.

of the books of the New Testament, but differs from it in some particulars.

The Muratorian Fragment represents the mind of the Western rather than the Eastern Christians. There are expressions¹ in it which indicate its Roman character. Accordingly this document seems to agree more closely with the old Latin version of the second century than with the Syriac version.²

The differences between the canons of the Eastern and Western Churches are important with reference to the history of the New Testament. It is desirable, therefore, to observe accurately the extent of those differences, and as far as possible the causes of them. Assuming that the Peshito, which was intended for general use, denotes the canon of the Eastern, and that the Muratorian Fragment in like manner denotes the canon of the Western Churches, we find that the books universally recognised in the East and West respectively in the second century were as follows:—

<i>East.</i>	<i>West.</i>
Four Gospels.	Four Gospels.
Acts of the Apostles.	Acts of the Apostles.
Thirteen Epistles of S. Paul.	Thirteen Epistles of S. Paul.
Epistle to the Hebrews.	Two (perhaps three) Epistles of
Epistle of S. James.	S. John.
1 Peter.	S. Jude.
1 John.	Apocalypse of S. John.

Comparing these two lists, we find that the books contained in the Eastern canon and not in the Western are:—

The Epistle to the Hebrews.
The Epistle of S. James.

On the other hand, the books in the Western canon and not in the Eastern are:—

¹ Thus Rome is called 'the city' (*ab urbe proficiscentis*), according to the well-known usage of the Romans.

² Dr. Westcott says that from considerations of style it seems certain that the Epistle to the Hebrews, that of S. James, and the Second of S. Peter, were not included in the original Latin version (*Bible in the Church*, c. 5).

The Second and perhaps the Third Epistle of S. John.

S. Jude.

The Apocalypse.

For the omission of the Epistle to the Hebrews and that of S. James from the Muratorian Fragment two probable explanations may be offered. The omissions may arise from the defective state of the manuscript, or from the fact that these two books were less known in the West than in the East.

An epistle expressly addressed to the Hebrews, and an epistle addressed by S. James to the 'twelve tribes,' would obviously be circulated more readily among the Eastern than the Western Christians. In an age when printing was unknown and travelling difficult, the process of transcribing copies and circulating them must have been necessarily slow. Hence the epistles in question were but little known or used in the West in the first and second centuries. The differences between the two canons indicate a diversity of use rather than a diversity of opinion. The Western Churches never positively pronounced any opinion against the authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews or that of S. James. On the other hand, the general acceptance of these epistles in the East, where their value could be more easily tested, is strong evidence of their Apostolic origin.

With respect to the second class of variations the case is similar. The Peshito being intended for general use would probably contain all the books esteemed canonical in the East, and the omission from that version of the Epistle of S. Jude, the Second and Third of S. John, and the Apocalypse, is strong evidence that those books were not much used in the Eastern Churches.¹ Probably they were not generally known in the

¹ In the third century the Apocalypse is cited as Scripture by Methodius, a writer of Asia Minor; with that possible exception the Canon of the East in the third century appears to have remained the same as that of the Peshito. This confirms the view of the present writer, that the Peshito contains all the books of the New Testament generally acknowledged in the East in the second century. But it is right to warn the reader that critics of the highest authority do not adopt this view. See *inter alia* Tregelles, *Canon Muratorianus*, v. s. 4, note 9. Mr. Etheridge, who devoted many years to the study of the subject, adopts substantially the same opinion as that expressed in these pages.—*Apostolical Acts and Epistles*, p. 29.

East ; though it is clear from the Muratorian Fragment, as well as from other writings of the second century, that they were well known in the West. They were not, however, universally accepted by the Western Churches, and this probably helps to explain the exclusion of them from the Eastern canon.

One of the most eminent early writers on the history of the New Testament is Eusebius. His account of the canon is as follows :—

This appears also to be the proper place to give a summary statement of the books of the New Testament already mentioned. And here among the first must be placed the holy quaternion of the Gospels ; these are followed by the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. After this must be mentioned the Epistles of Paul, which are followed by the acknowledged First Epistle of John, as also the First of Peter, to be admitted in like manner. After these is to be placed, if proper, the Revelation of John, concerning which we shall offer the different opinions in due time. These, then, are acknowledged as genuine. Among the disputed books, although they are well known and approved by many, are reckoned that called the Epistle of James and Jude ; also the Second Epistle of Peter and the Second and Third of John, whether they are of the evangelist or some other of the same name.

Among the spurious must be numbered both the books called the Acts of Paul, and that called 'Pastor,' and the Revelation of Peter. Besides these the books called the Epistle of Barnabas, and what are called the Teachings of the Apostles.

Moreover, as I said before, if it should appear right, the Revelation of John, which some, as before said, reject, but others rank among the genuine.

There are also some who number among these the Gospel according to the Hebrews, with which those of the Hebrews who have received Christ are particularly delighted. These may be said to be all concerning which there is any dispute.¹

It appears from this important passage that at the time when Eusebius wrote (the latter part of the third century), the list of undisputed (or universally accepted) books of the

¹ *Ecclesiastical History*, b. iii. c. 25. Eusebius proceeds to notice certain spurious and heretical books bearing falsely the names of several apostles. But to avoid complication all consideration of such books is here omitted.

New Testament was precisely the same as in the Muratorian canon.

There never was during the first three centuries an absolutely identical canon accepted throughout all Christendom. Some churches, as we have seen, received books which others did not receive. But we must be careful not to exaggerate these differences. The marvel is not that they existed, but that they were so few. By far the greater part of the New Testament was received by Christians everywhere undoubtedly; and as to the rest, though we cannot explain in detail every difference of usage, we can readily see that such differences were almost inevitable. Copies had to be multiplied by the slow, laborious, and expensive process of handwriting. The mere cost of copying must have impeded the circulation of the New Testament among an oppressed and poor people, as the Christians for the most part were.

And yet the early Church possessed in common a complete code of Christian doctrine, and valued it as her most precious treasure. That treasure she guarded with the utmost jealousy, and any attempt to tamper with it she visited with the most severe penalty which she could inflict.¹ With respect to the Four Gospels, the Epistles of S. Paul, and some others, there was never any doubt from the very first. As to other books we know that the churches exercised vigilant caution, and discussed in frequent councils the claims of writings which professed to be apostolic.²

The general result of our inquiries may be fairly stated as follows:—

By far the greater part of the books now deemed canonical were accepted by the first Christians universally.

Two books accepted universally in the East were only partially accepted in the West; and three, or perhaps four other books accepted universally in the West, were only partially accepted in the East.

¹ Tertullian gives an interesting instance. He states that a presbyter who composed a spurious book called the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, though he did it in honour of S. Paul, was expelled from his office. *De Baptismo*, c. 17.

² Tertullian, *De Pudic.* 10.

But the books partially accepted by the one branch of the Church were never formally rejected by the other branch.

These conclusions comprise all the books now deemed canonical, with one exception—the Second Epistle of Peter, which does not appear to have been adopted by either the Eastern or Western Church in the first and second centuries.

How much the early Christians valued the New Testament may be judged from the words of Tertullian in his eloquent invective against heretics who perverted the Scriptures. The books of the New Testament he declares to be the heritage of Christians, and Christians only. ‘This,’ he exclaims:—

This is my property. I have long possessed it. I possessed it before you. I hold sure title-deeds from the original owners themselves to whom the property belonged. I am the heir of the apostles. Just as they carefully prepared their will and testament and solemnly created a trust, even so I hold it.¹

¹ *De Præscriptione*, c. 37.

CHAPTER XIX.

LITURGIES AND PRAYERS.

IN this chapter we propose to discuss two distinct subjects:—I. The Relation of Christian Liturgies to those of the Jews; II. The Relation of Christian Liturgies to each other.

I. *The Relation of Christian to Jewish Liturgies.*

The Jews had settled forms of public and private prayers and thanksgivings long before the Christian era. These forms have for the most part been lost, but some are still extant. The Pentateuch contains a few which are as ancient as the times of Moses.

Thus the book Deuteronomy preserves the formula used in the picturesque ceremonial of offering first-fruits in the temple. Every Israelite was bound to make such an offering annually, either personally or by a representative. The offerings consisted of corn, olives, and fruits carried to the temple in baskets. On the appointed day vast crowds of people presented themselves at the sanctuary with these gifts. As the priest took the baskets and placed them before the altar, this beautiful hymn was sung in antiphony by two choruses¹:—

A Syrian and ready to perish was my father; and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. And when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and oppression. And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm.

¹ Philo Judæus, *Treatise on the Festival of First-Fruits*, c. 3. Philo's version of the hymn differs somewhat from that of the book Deuteronomy.

and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders. And He hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land which Thou, O Lord, hast given me.¹

This rite was observed so long as the temple was standing. Another similar formula, preserved in the same chapter of Deuteronomy, is that which accompanies the giving of tithes every third year :—

I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Thy commandments which Thou hast commanded me. I have not transgressed Thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them. I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead. But I have hearkened to the voice of the Lord my God, and have done according to all that Thou hast commanded me. Look down from Thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Thy people Israel, and the land which Thou hast given us, as Thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.²

Another form is preserved in the book of Numbers in the priestly benediction of the people :—

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee ; the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee ; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace.³

This for many ages was the form of sacerdotal benediction at the daily morning sacrifice, and the people responded :— ‘Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting.’⁴

After the Babylonish captivity Ezra and Nehemiah took active steps to restore the worship of the temple, and to

¹ Deut. xxvi. 5, 6-10. The words ‘A Syrian and ready to perish was my father’ are difficult to understand. The Mishna has instead of them, ‘Laban the Syrian had nearly caused my father to perish,’ which agrees with the account of Laban in Genesis xxxi. On the night of the Passover the head of the family was required to expound this passage in Deuteronomy to his children (*Pesachim*, c. 10, s. 4). ² Deut. xxvi. 13. ³ Num. vi. 24.

⁴ Edersheim, *The Temple, its Ministry and Services*, p. 141.

regulate the duties and offices of the priests and Levites. The names of various officials who had the care of the temple or the conduct of the services are recorded. Some of them had 'the oversight of the outward business of the house of God,' others kept the gates, others were singers, and of one, Mattaniah, we have this significant notice, that he 'was the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer.'¹ The prayers probably were those which had been used before the captivity, and which had been preserved traditionally. The expression just quoted obviously refers to a settled order of prayer and regular liturgical forms.

At a later date we find in the pages of Philo Judæus and Josephus, writers of the first century of Christianity, clear references to the public prayers of the temple in their days, when the sacrifices continued to be offered.

Josephus has a very remarkable passage on this subject:—

There ought to be but one temple for one God, for likeness is the constant foundation of agreement. This temple ought to be common to all men, because He is the common God of all men. His priests are to be continually about His worship, over whom he that is the first by birth is to be their ruler perpetually. His business must be to offer sacrifices to God together with those priests who are joined with him. . . . And for our duty at the sacrifices themselves we ought in the first to pray for the common welfare of all, and after that our own. For we are made for fellowship one with another, and he who prefers the common good before what is peculiar to himself is above all acceptable to God. And let our prayers and supplications be made humbly to God, not so much that He would give us what is good, for He has already given that of His own accord, and hath proposed the same publicly to all, as that we may duly receive it, and when we have received it, preserve it.²

Philo has a passage so closely corresponding to this, that it manifestly refers to the same prayers. He says:—

The High Priest of the Jews offers them up not only on behalf of the whole race of mankind, but also on behalf of the different parts of nature—of the earth, of water, of air, and of

¹ Neh. xi. 17.

² Josephus, *Apion*, b. ii. c. 24.

fire—and pours forth his prayers and thanksgivings for them all, looking upon the world—as it really is—as his country: for which, therefore, he is accustomed to implore and propitiate its Governor by supplications and prayers; beseeching Him to give a portion of His own merciful and humane nature to the things which He has created.¹

The most celebrated form of prayers among the ancient Jews was the Eighteen Benedictions or Eulogies, called in Hebrew the *Shemoneh Esreh*. These existed nearly in their present form in the age of Christ and the apostles, and some of them are much earlier. There can be no reasonable doubt that, with the exception of one or two brief additions made in somewhat later times, they were in daily use in the temple when Christ frequented it.² Subsequently, the number of Benedictions was increased to nineteen by the addition of a prayer against Christians composed by Gamaliel, the preceptor of S. Paul.

These Eulogies express confidence and trust in the Lord and reverence for the law. They may be divided into three parts. The first three Eulogies set forth the praises of Jehovah. Then follow fourteen which are petitions for the supply of various spiritual and temporal needs. The last two Eulogies celebrate the praises of God.

This form was used on numerous occasions. It was recited in private devotions, and in the services of the temple and the synagogue.

Christ and His disciples regularly attended these services. Of this practice there are numerous notices in the New Testament. S. Luke says:—‘He came to Nazareth, where He was brought up, and entered, as His custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and stood up to read.’³ When accused before the high-priest, who asked Him of His teaching, Jesus replied: ‘I have spoken openly to the world; I ever

¹ Philo Judæus, *On Monarchy*, b. 2, c. 5.

² Modern critics are agreed on this point. See *inter alia* Dr. John Lightfoot, *Exercitations upon S. Matthew*, vi. 9; Edersheim, *History of the Jewish Nation*, p. 363; Bishop Lightfoot, *Clement of Rome*, Appendix, p. 461.

The *Mishna* quotes a dictum of Gamaliel, the preceptor of S. Paul, that ‘Man must daily say the Eighteen Benedictions,’ *Berachoth*, c. 4, s. 3.

³ Luke iv. 16.

taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together.'¹ After the Crucifixion the disciples 'were continually in the temple blessing God.'² In the Acts of the Apostles the presence of the apostles in the temple and synagogues is repeatedly mentioned.

Some portions of the daily public prayers have been preserved. These have been subjected in modern times to the most elaborate and severe criticism, by which later additions have been eliminated from the forms in use in the temple at the morning and evening sacrifices.³

The following two prayers preceded the recitation of the *Shema*, which was a creed composed of three passages from the Pentateuch⁴:—

BEFORE THE SHEMA, MORNING AND EVENING.

I.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, King of the world, Who formest the light and createst darkness, Who makest peace and createst everything; Who in mercy givest light to the earth and those who dwell upon it, and in Thy goodness renewest day by day and continually the works of creation. Blessed be the Lord our God for the glory of His handiworks, and for the light-giving lights which He hath made for His praise. Selah. Blessed be the Lord Who has formed the lights.

II.

With great love hast Thou loved us, O Lord our God, and with much overflowing pity hast Thou pitied us. Our Father and our King, for the sake of our fathers who trusted in Thee, and Thou taughtest them the statutes of life, have mercy upon us, and enlighten our eyes in Thy law. Cause our hearts to cleave to Thy commandments. Unite our hearts to love and fear Thy name, and we shall not be put to shame, world without end. For Thou art a God Who preparest salvation, and us hast Thou chosen from among all nations and tongues, and hast in truth brought us near Thy great name (Selah), in order that we in love may praise Thee and Thy unity. Blessed be the Lord Who in love chose His people Israel.

¹ John xviii. 20.

² Luke xxiv. 53.

³ The subject has been minutely examined by Dr. Zunz in his *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*. The prayers are here taken from Dr. Edersheim's *History of the Jewish Nation*, c. 10.

⁴ Deut. vi. 4-9, 'Hear, O Israel!'; Deut. xi. 13-21; Num. xv. 37-41.

III.

A Concluding Morning Prayer.

True it is that Thou art Jehovah, our God and the God of our fathers, our King and the King of our fathers, our Saviour and the Saviour of our fathers, our Creator, the Rock of our salvation, our Helper and our Deliverer. Thy name is from everlasting, and there is no God beside Thee. A new song did they that were delivered sing to Thy name by the seashore; together did all praise and own Thee King, and say, Jehovah shall reign, world without end. Blessed be the Lord Who saveth Israel.

IV.

An Additional Evening Prayer.

O Lord our God, cause us to lie down in peace, and raise us up again to life. O our King, spread over us the tabernacle of Thy peace. Strengthen us before Thee in Thy good counsel, and deliver us for Thy name's sake. Be Thou for protection round about us; keep far from us the enemy, the pestilence, the sword, famine, and affliction. Keep Satan from before and from behind us, and hide us in the shadow of Thy wings. For Thou art a God Who keepest and deliverest us; and Thou, O God, art a gracious and merciful King. Keep Thou our going out and our coming in, for life and for peace, from henceforth and for ever.

In the synagogues, which existed throughout all countries where the Jews had settlements, the services were very different from those of the temple. The sacrifices and elaborate Mosaic rites were absent from these numerous places of Jewish worship, but, on the other hand, some of the temple prayers were used in them.

The most ancient of all the synagogue prayers is the *Kaddish*. It was in the Chaldee language, and was esteemed so sacred that it could not be used in private prayer.

The *Kaddish* was as follows. It is remarkable that the first two petitions—that the name of God may be hallowed, and that His kingdom may come—are the same as the first two petitions of the Lord's Prayer; and that in both God is styled the Father Who is in heaven.

The Kaddish.

May His great name be extolled and hallowed in the world, which He created according to His will. May He cause His kingdom to come. May His redemption flourish. May His Messiah speedily come, and may He deliver His people in your time and in your days, and in the time of the whole house of Israel, and that quickly, and say ye 'Amen, amen.' Let His great name be blessed for ever and ever. Let His name be celebrated and His memory extolled through all generations. Let the name of the Holy, Blessed God be celebrated, praised, adored, exalted, extolled, and preached, far above every benediction and hymn, praise and thanksgiving, ascribed to things in the world, and say ye 'Amen.' In pity and with favour receive our prayers. May the prayers and desires of Israel be received before their Father Who is in heaven, and say ye 'Amen.' May the name of the Lord be blessed from this time forth for evermore. May there be great peace from heaven and life for us and for all Israel, and say ye 'Amen.'

This prayer was chanted every day in the synagogue. It was followed by the Shemah, or creed, and the Shemoneh Esreh, or Eighteen Benedictions, already noticed. Certain psalms were recited, other prayers followed, and the service concluded by a repetition of the Kaddish, and the dismissal of the congregation.²

This was the form of daily morning prayer in the synagogues. But on Sabbaths and festivals there were additional services. Whenever the law was read after the usual morning prayer, the chazzan, or minister, brought the sacred roll

¹ Tholuck remarks that in many forms of Jewish prayers we find expressions such as these: 'Thy name be hallowed by our works,' 'Thy name be hallowed and Thy memorial glorified.' The same writer quotes a Jewish morning prayer: 'O Lord our Governor, grant that we may follow Thy laws. Lead us not into sin, nor into temptation, nor into contempt. Remove from us evil desires. Grant us good desires;' and thinks it probable that the coincidences with the Lord's Prayer are not accidental (*Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount*, translated by Brown, p. 325). It may be added that the adoption of familiar phrases in the Lord's Prayer had several advantages. These phrases were sanctified by usage and endeared to the people by early associations, and therefore were easily remembered.

² Bernard, *Synagogue and the Church*, Part I. c. 12, citing Maimonides. *Hilcoth. Tep.* c. 9.

from the ark in which it was kept, and delivered it to the reader. He, ascending the pulpit, read the appointed lesson, using first this form :—

Reader : Bless ye the Blessed God.

People : Praised be the Blessed God for ever and ever.

Reader : Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, Governor of the world. Who hast chosen us from all people and hast given to us Thy law. Blessed be Thou, O Lord, Who hast given to us Thy law.

People : Amen.

The number of readers and the number of lections varied. At Sabbath-morning services there were seven. On certain other festivals the number varied from three to six.

The five books of Moses were read through once every year, and were divided into convenient sections for that purpose. But on festivals, such as the Passover, Pentecost, and others, these sections were omitted and proper lessons were substituted. Selections from the prophets were read on Sabbath mornings, and on festivals and fast days. The other writings of the Old Testament were very rarely read in the synagogues.¹

The lessons were read in Hebrew, and after that language ceased to be generally understood, were interpreted by an interpreter, who stood beside the reader.

After the lessons on the Sabbath-day there was usually a discourse addressed to the congregation. This discourse was delivered by the ruler of the synagogue, or he might give permission to any educated person present to stand up and address the congregation. In accordance with this practice

¹ The reading of the law and the prophets in the synagogue is frequently mentioned in the New Testament : ' And there was delivered to Him the roll of the prophet Isaiah. And He unfolded the roll ' (Luke iv. 17). ' And they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. And Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, hearken ' (Acts xiii. 15). ' For Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath ' (Acts xv. 21). ' But unto this day, whensoever Moses is read a veil lieth upon their heart ' (2 Cor. iii. 15).

Christ delivered a discourse in the synagogue at Nazareth, and S. Paul at Antioch of Pisidia.

Our means of comparing ancient Jewish Prayers with the first Christian Liturgies are extremely scanty. Still, enough of both remains to show a resemblance between them—not indeed verbally—but rather in the general tone and character of the subjects. Reference has already been made to the *Shemoneh Esreh*,¹ or Eighteen Benedictions, some of which were undoubtedly composed before the commencement of the Christian era. The first three and the last three are by common consent the most ancient.

The second of these Eulogies is as follows:—

Thou, Lord, art mighty to all eternity. Thou raisest the dead. Thou art mighty to save. In kindness He satisfieth the living; in great pity He raiseth the dead; He upholdeth those that fall. He healeth the sick and setteth free those that are bound. He will manifest His faithfulness to those who sleep in the dust. Who is like the Lord of might, and who is like Thee, Thou King, who killest and makest alive and causest salvation to spring forth? Faithful art Thou to restore life to the dead. Blessed be the Lord who restoreth life to the dead.

With this may be compared a passage from the Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions:—

Let us pray for our brethren exercised with sickness that the Lord may deliver them from every sickness and every disease, and restore them sound into His holy church. Let us pray for those that travel by water or by land. Let us pray for those that are in mines, in banishments, in bonds for the name of the Lord. Let us pray for those that are afflicted with bitter servitude.

The Jewish Eulogy and the Christian prayer differ in form, but both ascribe to God the power to heal the sick and to deliver from captivity.

In the third Eulogy we have this passage:—

We will sanctify Thy name in the world as those do who sanctify it in the height of heaven, as it is written by Thy

¹ *Shemoneh Esreh* means eighteen.

prophets, And they called one to another Holy, holy, holy is the Lord. The whole earth is full of His glory. Together do they sing praise. Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His habitation.

This strongly resembles the *Tersanctus*, or triumphal hymn of the Christian Liturgies:—

Thousand thousands of archangels incessantly, and with constant and loud voices, and let all the people say it with them—Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of His glory. Be Thou blessed for ever. Amen.¹

The fifth and sixth Eulogies may be compared with the prayer for penitents in the Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions. These Eulogies are:—

Bring us back again, O our Father, to Thy law. Bring us near, O our King, to Thy service, and cause us to return with a perfect repentance before Thy face. Blessed be the Lord, who taketh pleasure in repentance.

Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned. Pardon us, our King, for we have transgressed; for Thou pardonest and forgivest. Blessed be the gracious Lord who multiplieth forgiveness.

In the Liturgy of the eighth book of the Apostolic Constitutions we have a similar passage:—

Let us all pray earnestly for our brethren in the state of penitence that God, the lover of compassion, will show them the way of repentance, and accept their return and confession, and bruise Satan under their feet shortly, and redeem them from the snare of the devil, and free them from every unlawful word and sinful practice and wicked thought. Forgive their offences voluntary and involuntary, and write them in the book of life.

The ninth Eulogy is very similar to a passage in the Liturgy of S. James. This Eulogy is as follows:—

Bless us, O Lord our God, in every work of our hands, and bless our years, and grant a copious dew and rain in all our

¹ *Apostolic Constitutions*, b. viii. c. 12.

land, and satisfy the world with Thy blessing, and send down moisture upon the habitable earth. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who givest Thy blessing to the years.

In the Liturgy of S. James we find this prayer:—

Remember, O Lord, favourable weather, peaceful showers, beneficent dews, abundance of fruit, and crown the year with Thy goodness: for the eyes of all wait on Thee, and Thou givest them their food in due season.

The eighteenth Eulogy—a beautiful prayer for peace—is subjoined:—

Grant peace, goodness, and blessing, grace and mercy and compassion unto us and to all Thy people Israel. Bless us, O our Father, all together with the light of Thy countenance. Thou hast given us, O Lord our God, the law of life and loving-kindness, and righteousness, and blessing, and compassion, and life, and peace; and may it seem good in Thy sight to bless Thy people Israel at all times and at every moment with Thy peace. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who bledest Thy people Israel with peace.

In the oldest Liturgies there are frequent prayers for peace. In the liturgical portion of the Epistle of S. Clement, we find passages which resemble the Eulogy just quoted:—

Yea, Lord, make Thy face to shine upon us in peace for our good. . . . Give concord and peace to us and to all that dwell upon earth, as Thou gavest to our fathers when they called on Thee in faith and truth with holiness, that we may be saved (s. 60).

And in the sixty-fourth section of the same Epistle there is a prayer that God may 'grant unto every soul that is called after His excellent and holy name, faith, fear, peace, patience, long-suffering, temperance, chastity, and soberness, that they may be well-pleasing unto His name, through our High Priest and Guardian Jesus Christ.'¹

¹ After comparing several passages from the *Shemoneh Esreh* with the liturgical portion of S. Clement's *Epistle*, Bishop Lightfoot observes: 'The resemblance, however, is perhaps greater in the general tenor of the thoughts and cast of the sentences than in the individual expressions. At the same

Vitringa has noticed at great length the similarity of the responses of the people in the Jewish and Christian Liturgies. Among these, the Amen occupies the first place. It occurs with great frequency in Jewish worship, and with equal frequency in Christian worship; and the practice of using this response in churches was obviously borrowed from the usage of the synagogue.

In the temple, however, the response was not 'Amen,' but, 'Blessed be the name of the glory of His kingdom for ever and ever;' and almost exactly the same response occurs frequently in the Liturgy of S. Chrysostom.¹

Another Christian response which, according to Vitringa, has its parallel in Jewish prayers is the *Sursum Corda*: ['Lift up your hearts; we lift them up unto the Lord']. This form is found in all the ancient Christian Liturgies.

Several quotations have already been made from the Liturgy, or Eucharistic service, in the eighth book of the Apostolic Constitutions. But besides that service, the same book contains prayers for other occasions. Among them are the daily morning and evening services.

It is significant that the evening service comes first. This is in accordance with Jewish custom, by which the day was reckoned from evening to evening, and is a strong mark of the antiquity of these prayers and of their Jewish origin.

The order of evening prayer in the Apostolic Constitutions may be briefly described. It commences with this rubrical direction:—

When it is evening thou, O bishop, shalt assemble the church; and after the repetition of the psalm at the lighting up of the lights, the deacon shall bid prayers for the catechumens, the energumens, the illuminated, and the penitents.

time, it is instructive to observe what topics are rejected as too purely Jewish, and what others are introduced to give expression to Christian ideas (S. Clement of Rome, Appendix, p. 463).

¹ Vitringa, *De Synagoga Vetere*, lib. iii. pars. 2, cc. 18, 19. 'The tradition is that they answered not "Amen" in the house of the sanctuary. What said they then? "Blessed be the name of the glory of His kingdom."'—Lightfoot, *Exercitationes on S. Matthew*, vi. 13.

The prayers were the same as those used in the Eucharistic service. After the dismissal of all but the 'faithful,' there followed prayers for them and this special evening prayer:—

Save us, O God, and raise us up by Thy Christ. Let us stand up and beg the mercies of the Lord for His compassion, for the angel of peace, for what things are good and profitable, for a Christian departure out of this life, an evening and a night of peace and free from sin. And let us beg that the whole course of our lives may be unblameable. Let us dedicate ourselves and one another to the living God through His Christ.¹

After that followed a prayer by the bishop; the deacon directed the faithful to 'bow down for the laying on of hands;' the bishop pronounced a benediction, and finally the congregation was dismissed by the deacon with the formula, 'Depart in peace.'

The daily morning service was of very similar character. There were the same prayers for the catechumens and penitents, and after their departure similar prayers for the faithful, the benediction, the laying on of hands, and the final dismissal by the deacon.

The following passage in the morning prayer may be compared with a prayer of the Jewish synagogue already quoted. The Christian prayer is—

O God, the God of spirits and of all flesh, who art beyond compare, and standest in need of nothing, who hast given the sun to rule the day and the moon and stars to rule the night, do Thou now also look down upon us with gracious eyes, and receive our morning prayer, and have mercy upon us.

Very similar is the daily Jewish prayer—

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, King of the world, who formest the light and createst the darkness, who makest peace and createst everything, who in mercy givest light to the earth and to those who dwell upon it, and in Thy goodness renewest day by day and continually the works of creation. Blessed be the Lord our God for the glory of His handiworks, and for the light-giving lights which He hath made for His praise.

¹ *Apostolic Constitutions*, b. viii. s. 69.

The concluding prayer of the domestic Paschal rite after the fourth cup was—

Thy works shall praise Thee, Jehovah our God. All Thy saints, the righteous who do Thy pleasure, and all Thy people the house of Israel, with joyous song let them praise, and bless, and magnify, and glorify, and exalt, and reverence, and sanctify, and ascribe the kingdom to Thy name, O our King! For it is good to praise Thee and pleasure to sing praises unto Thy name: for from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God.¹

With this may be compared a passage in the Liturgy of S. James, immediately preceding the *Tersanctus*, already quoted:—

Verily, it is meet and right proper and due to praise Thee, to bless Thee, to worship Thee, to glorify Thee, to give thanks to Thee, Maker of every creature visible and invisible, the treasure of eternal good things, the Fountain of immortality, God and Lord of all, whom the heaven of heavens praise and all the host of them.

Materials for a complete comparison of ancient Jewish and Christian Liturgies are wanting. The forms which remain are mere fragments. The Jewish ritual of ante-Christian times has nearly all been lost, and a great deal of the earliest Christian prayers also. It is highly probable, however, that if the materials were more abundant, the connection between the two kinds of services would appear clearly. The presumption that the first Christians, in ordering the worship of the Church, would have regard to the model of the synagogue and temple amounts almost to certainty. We find in the Acts of the Apostles repeated instances of a desire on the part of the apostles to respect ancient doctrines and rites. Veneration for the religion of their fathers was the strongest trait of the Jewish character. These feelings must have existed in the apostles and their disciples, and, therefore, would naturally induce them to adopt as far as practicable the ancient ritual. This presumption is con-

¹ Edersheim, *The Temple*, p. 210.

firmed by a comparison of the Jewish and Christian forms, so far as we have materials for that purpose; and though the results of that comparison are scanty, they are sufficient to show that the resemblances of Christian prayers to those of the Jews arise from a natural process of development.

II. *The Relation of Christian Liturgies to each other.*

The first Christians adopted in modified forms various Jewish rites and ceremonies.

Besides the regular liturgical forms of the temple and the synagogue, there were other prayers for private devotions. It was very usual with the doctors among the Jews to compose short forms of prayers, and to deliver them to their scholars, and of these prayers numerous examples have been preserved.¹ They were not intended to supersede the accustomed prayers, but were superadded to them to suit special occasions.

In accordance with this practice, John the Baptist had taught his disciples a special form of prayer.² Of that form nothing has been preserved; but the way in which it is mentioned in the New Testament shows that it was something different from the pre-existing forms. In like manner Christ, when one of His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray as John had taught his disciples,³ immediately complied with the request, and delivered that form—the Lord's Prayer—which from that day to this has been ever in use in the Catholic Church.

From the very commencement of the Church it had its own special prayers and devotions in addition to those of the temple and the synagogue. This is clear from the very first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where it is stated that the apostles abode in 'the upper chamber,' and

¹ See examples, Lightfoot, *Exercitations on S. Matthew*, vi. 9.

² 'Lord, teach us to pray; even as John also taught his disciples' (Luke xi. 1).

³ 'Inasmuch as John had introduced a new order of prayers, this disciple had not improperly presumed to ask whether they too must not pray according to some special rule of their Master; not indeed to another God, but in another manner.'—Tertullian, *Adv. Marcion*. b. iv. c. 26.

'all with one accord continued stedfastly in the prayer' with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.'

This congregation numbered about 120 persons, but shortly afterwards the number increased to about 3,000; of whom it is stated that 'they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread and the prayers.'

From the use of the definite article in the expressions 'the prayer,' and 'the prayers,' it seems at least probable that they had already settled forms of prayer, and from the use of the plural number that they had fixed times of daily assembly in their several congregations, besides their attendance as devout Israelites on the temple ritual.

We cannot, however, ascertain with precision the time when the Church had a fixed liturgy. Probably the process was a gradual one. There are several indications in the New Testament, and especially in the writings of S. Paul, of the establishment of a settled order and ritual of worship. The same spirit which induced the apostle to lay down rules for Church government, and the appointment of the ministers and officers of the Church, would induce him to prescribe regularity of worship. God, he reminds the Corinthians, 'is not a God of confusion, but of peace,' and he exhorts them that in their assemblies 'all things be done decently and in order.'

Accordingly, he gives minute directions as to the mode in which the services are to be conducted. If anyone addresses the congregation in a foreign tongue 'let one interpret, and if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church.'³ Women are to be veiled, but men to have their heads uncovered. Women are on no account to address the con-

¹ προσκατερόντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν τῇ προσευχῇ (Acts i. 14).

² 1 Cor. xiv. 33, 40.

³ 1 Cor. xiv. 28. Some have absurdly supposed that speaking with tongues meant the utterance of unintelligible sounds. If so, how could there be an interpreter? Besides S. Paul says, 'I thank God I speak with tongues more than you all;' that is, I am more versed in foreign languages. Is it credible that the great apostle would make a boast of making senseless noises?

gregation, 'and if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home.' There is also a distinct reference to the practice—borrowed from the Hebrew worship of the congregation—responding *Amen* at the end of prayers.¹

Again, in his First Epistle to Timothy, there are several directions as to the mode in which the services are to be conducted. He exhorts 'that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men, for kings, and all that are in high place, that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity.'² Not only is the subject of the prayers prescribed, but the attitude also. He desires 'that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands.'³ This practice of praying with uplifted hands was an ancient Jewish usage.⁴

Another usage of Christian worship to which the apostle refers is that of congregational singing. To the Colossians S. Paul writes, 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and reminding one another with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.'⁵ The three words for 'psalms,' 'hymns,' and 'spiritual songs,' are by no means synonymous. The psalms, to which the apostle refers, are probably those of the Old Testament. The hymns were direct ascriptions of praise to God, like the Hallel, which Christ and His apostles sang at His last Passover. The spiritual songs were other Christian metrical compositions, which did not bear the character of hymns of praise.⁶

These metrical compositions appear to have been common

¹ 'How shall he that filleth the place of the unlearned' (τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἰδιώτου) 'say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he knoweth not what thou sayest?' (1 Cor. xiv. 16). The meaning obviously is that if the prayers are uttered in a foreign language without interpretation, the lay members of the congregation will be unable to respond Amen.

² 1 Tim. ii. 7.

³ 1 Tim. ii. 8.

⁴ The visitor to the catacombs at Rome cannot fail to notice numerous representations of *orante* praying with raised hands.

⁵ διδάσκοντες καὶ ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς (Col. iii. 16). The etymological meaning of the word *νοθετέω* is 'to put in mind.' Nearly the same phrase occurs in the Epistle to the Ephesians, v. 19.

⁶ There is a long dissertation on the meaning of the three words in Trench's *Synonyms of the New Testament*, § lxviii.

in the primitive Church. Eusebius quotes a passage from an ancient author, whose name is not recorded, who says, 'Those psalms and hymns which were written by the brethren from the beginning celebrate Christ, the Word of God, by asserting his divinity.'¹

Some fragments of these ancient poems are preserved in the New Testament itself.

The passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians—

Awake, thou that sleepest,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ shall shine on thee,²

is undoubtedly the fragment of a hymn. It is introduced as a quotation by the phrase 'wherefore he saith,' or 'wherefore one saith.'³ It certainly is not a quotation from the Old Testament, and it has a metrical rhythm which is lost in translation.

There is a passage in the Apocalypse of the same character. It is expressly called the 'song of the Lamb'⁴:—

Great and marvellous are Thy works,
O Lord God, the Almighty;
Righteous and true are Thy ways,
Thou King of the ages.
Who shall not fear, O Lord,
And glorify Thy name?
For Thou only art holy;
For all nations shall come
And worship before Thee;
For Thy righteous acts have been shown.

Another fragment of a hymn or metrical creed is embedded in the First Epistle to Timothy⁵:—

He Who was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the spirit,
Seen of angels,
Preached among the nations,
Believed on in the world,
Received up in glory.

¹ Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. v. c. 28.

³ διὸ λέγει.

⁴ Rev. xv. 3.

² Ephes. v. 14.

⁵ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

Again, in the Second Epistle to Timothy¹ is a passage expressly introduced as a quotation by the phrase 'faithful is the saying':—

For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him ;
 If we endure, we shall also reign with Him ;
 If we shall deny Him, He also will deny us ;
 If we are faithless, He abideth faithful,
 For He cannot deny Himself.

Here again the Greek has a cadence which strongly suggests that it was intended for singing.

The oldest Christian liturgical forms, now extant, are contained in the eighth book of the Apostolic Constitutions. The following passage occurs in the Bidding Prayer for the Faithful at the Eucharist:—

Let us pray for every episcopate which is under the whole heavens, of those who rightly divide the word of Thy truth. And let us pray for our bishop James and his parishes. Let us pray for our bishop Clement and his parishes. Let us pray for our bishop Euodius and his parishes. Let us pray for our bishop Annianus and his parishes ; and that the compassionate God may grant them to continue in His holy churches in health, honour, and long life, and afford them an honourable old age in godliness and righteousness.²

If we believe this passage to be genuine, we must believe it to have been part of a prayer used in the lifetime of the

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 11.

² *Apostolic Constitutions*, lib. 8, c. 10. Euodius was the first Bishop of Antioch, and was succeeded by Ignatius (Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. iii. c. 22). Annianus was first Bishop of Alexandria (*Ib.* c. 14). Clement was Bishop of Rome, but the time when he held that office is a matter of much controversy. Whiston, in his *Essay on the Apostolic Constitutions* (c. 1), discusses the subject most elaborately, and argues very cogently that the episcopate of Clement commenced before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Tertullian (*De Præscript*, c. 32) distinctly asserts that S. Clement was ordained Bishop of Rome by S. Peter, and refers to authentic documents in proof of that statement. 'In this manner the Apostolic Churches exhibit their calendars (*fastos*), as the Church of Smyrna, which records that Polycarp was placed there by John, and the Church of Rome, which makes Clement to have been ordained in like manner by Peter.'

Apostle James. There is no reason to suppose that the passage is a forgery, nor any conceivable motive for imposture. The prayer breathes the spirit of the purest and simplest Christian piety. Forgeries are committed from interested motives. For instance, the spurious letters which Eusebius found at Edessa, of which mention has been made in a previous chapter,¹ were obviously written from a desire to give importance to the church in that city. Again, we often find interpolations in ancient documents introduced in support of doctrines of later times. But here there is nothing of the kind. The prayer, too long to be quoted in full, is from beginning to end an earnest supplication for all sorts and conditions of men, and has not the slightest taint of superstition or heretical doctrine. Take, for example, the following beautiful passage:—

Let us pray for our brethren exercised by sickness, that the Lord may deliver them from every sickness and every disease, and restore them sound to the Church. Let us pray for those who travel by water or by land. Let us pray for those that are in the mines, in banishment, in prisons, and in bonds for the name of the Lord. Let us pray for those that are afflicted with bitter servitude. Let us pray for our enemies and those that hate us. Let us pray for those who persecute us for the name of the Lord, that the Lord may pacify their anger and scatter their wrath against us. Let us pray for those that are without and are wandered out of the way, that the Lord may convert them.

This is not the language of imposture; on the contrary, it is the very echo of the needs, hopes, and sufferings of the first Christians. Many were in bonds and imprisonment. Many were compelled to work in mines, and were afflicted with bitter servitude. For all these prayer is made, and for their persecutors also. They who offered up this beautiful form of supplication had learned well the precept: 'Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you.'

The Apostolic Constitutions have not come down to us

¹ *Ante*, chap. viii.

in their original form. It is beyond doubt that they contain numerous interpolations made during the first four centuries. Then, it may be reasonably asked : how are we to distinguish the original work from the later additions ? To this it may be replied that these additions very often show, by internal evidence, that they are the work of later times. For instance, some of them contain theological expressions¹ which we know were not in use until after the Apostolic era. But these interpolations or additions ought not to induce us to reject the Apostolic Constitutions entirely. We find similar additions to several of the epistles in the New Testament. For example, we find at the end of the Epistle to the Romans in the Authorised Version, 'Written to the Romans from Corinthus, and sent by Phœbe, servant of the Church at Cenchrea.' This note does not form part of the original epistle, and yet no one supposes that the genuineness of the original is affected by the later addition.

It is not, however, necessary here to enter upon the general subject of the dates of the various parts of the 'Apostolic Constitutions.' We are concerned only with the Liturgy of the eighth book, and we there find strong internal evidence that it is in the main a composition of the Apostolic era. It contains no trace of doctrines introduced in later times, and the prayer that S. James and his contemporaries may have long life and an honourable age is irresistible evidence that the prayer was written and used during their lifetime.

A comparison of the most ancient Christian liturgies with each other leads to important and interesting results. The resemblance between these forms in many passages is so close that it cannot be accidental.

An exhaustive inquiry into this extensive subject would require the space of a large volume. All that can be attempted here is to notice some few of the particulars in which these liturgical forms resemble each other.

The celebrated Epistle of S. Clement contains a long prayer which is undoubtedly a work of the first century.

¹ *E.g.* 'the mother of God' and 'consubstantial.'

The recovery of this passage, long missing from the epistle, is one of the most remarkable discoveries of Christian literature. A period of nearly two centuries and a half has elapsed since the epistle was published from a manuscript now in the British Museum. This document had lost one leaf near the end, amounting to about one-tenth of the whole. After so long a lapse of time it seemed almost beyond hope that the epistle would be ever restored to its entirety. In the year 1875, however, Bryennios, Metropolitan of Serræ, published a complete edition of the epistle from a manuscript discovered by him in the library of the Most Holy Sepulchre at Constantinople. It happened very remarkably that only a few months after the important discovery was made known, another authority for the complete text of the epistle was found in a Syriac manuscript purchased in Paris for the University of Cambridge, and now deposited in the University Library.¹

The newly recovered portion of the Epistle of S. Clement is an elaborate prayer which extends over three long chapters, commencing with an invocation, and ending with an intercession for rulers and governors.

That this prayer is liturgical, and was intended for use in Christian congregations, may be inferred from several circumstances. It is introduced with this solemn exordium: 'We will ask, with fervency of prayer and supplication, that the Creator of the Universe may guard intact the number of His elect that is numbered throughout the whole world, through His beloved Son, Jesus Christ.' The prayer bears all the marks of careful composition, and the resemblances in various passages to portions of the earliest known liturgies are close and numerous.

For instance, there is a frequent similarity in tone and thought to the Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions. In that composition we have the prayer already quoted:—

Let us pray for those that are in the mines, in banishments, in prisons, and in bonds for the name of the Lord, &c.

¹ *S. Clement of Rome. An Appendix, containing the newly recovered portions, by Dr. J. B. Lightfoot (Bishop of Durham).*

Similarly, in the prayer of S. Clement, we find this passage:—

Save those among us who are in tribulation. Have mercy on the lowly; lift up the fallen; show Thyself unto the needy. Heal the ungodly; convert the wanderers of Thy people. Feed the hungry. Release our prisoners. Raise up the weak. Comfort the faint-hearted. Let all the Gentiles know that Thou art God alone.¹

In the Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions there is a prayer for kings and rulers, thus:—

Let us pray for kings and those in authority, that they may be peaceable towards us, that so we may have and lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.²

To this we have a parallel in the prayer of S. Clement for 'our rulers and governors upon the earth':—

Thou Lord and Master hast given them the power of sovereignty through Thine excellent and unspeakable might, that we, knowing the glory and honour which Thou hast given unto them, may submit ourselves unto them, in nothing resisting Thy will. Grant unto them, therefore, O Lord, health, peace, concord, stability, that they may administer the government which Thou hast given them without failure.³

¹ S. Clement, *Epistle*, s. 59. In the *Ancient Liturgy of S. Mark* (s. 13) is a closely similar passage:—'Look down in mercy and compassion, O Lord, and heal the sick among Thy people. Deliver them and us, O Lord, from sickness and disease, and drive away the spirit of weakness. Raise up those who have been long afflicted, and heal those who are vexed with unclean spirits. Have mercy on those that are in prison, or in mines, or on trial, or condemned, or in exile, or crushed by cruel bondage or tribute. Deliver them, O Lord, for Thou art our God, who settest the captives free; who raisest up the down-trodden; who givest hope to the hopeless, help to the helpless. . . . Pity, relieve, and restore every Christian soul that is afflicted or wandering. . . . Look down, and by Thy saving power heal all diseases of soul and body. Guide and prosper our brethren who have gone or are about to go abroad, whether they travel by land or river or lake or public road. . . .' The correspondence between this prayer and that of the *Apostolic Constitutions* quoted above is very remarkable.

² *Apostolic Constitutions*, lib. viii. c. 13.

³ S. Clement, *Epistle*, s. 61; so also in the *Liturgy of S. Mark*, s. 14:—'Guide and direct in all peace the king, army, magistrates, councils, peoples, and neighbourhoods, and all our outgoings and incomings. O Lord, grant us Thy peace in unity and love.'

The resemblance is rather in the general character of the petitions than in individual phrases. Sometimes, however, particular expressions occur which are almost identical. Thus, in the introduction to S. Clement's prayer, we find a petition that 'the Creator of the Universe may guard intact unto the end the number that hath been numbered of the elect throughout the whole world.' In the Apostolic Constitutions we find the phrase: 'O eternal God, who art plenteous in mercy and compassion, who hast made manifest the constitution of the world by Thy operations therein, and keepest the number of thine elect.'¹ Again, in the Apostolic Constitutions God is said to be He 'whose look dries the abysses.' In S. Clement's prayer He is styled 'the God of all flesh, who lookest into the abysses, who scannest the works of man.'²

The triumphal hymn, called, from the first words of it, the *Tersanctus*, or *Trisagion*, was always sung before the consecration of the Eucharist. This hymn is given in slightly different forms in the Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions, and in those of S. James and S. Mark, and is introduced by a form of prayer which is almost identical in all three services. In the Apostolic Constitutions this portion of the service is as follows:—

Thee do the innumerable hosts of angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, principalities, authorities, and powers, Thine everlasting armies, adore. The cherubim and six-winged seraphim with twain covering their feet, with twain their heads, and with twain flying say, together with thousand thousands of archangels and ten thousand times ten thousand of angels incessantly, and with constant and loud voices, and let all the people say it with them—*Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of His glory. Be Thou blessed for evermore. Amen.*

The corresponding passage in the Liturgy of S. Mark is as follows:—

Round Thee stand ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy angels and hosts of archangels. And Thy most honoured creatures the many-eyed cherubim

¹ *Apostolic Constitutions*, b. viii. c. 22.

² *Ib.* b. viii. c. 7; S. Clement, *Epistle*, s. 59.

and the six-winged seraphim, with twain they cover their faces, and with twain they cover their feet, and with twain they do fly. And they cry one to another for ever with the voice of praise, and glorify Thee, O Lord, singing aloud the triumphal and thrice holy hymn to Thy great glory—*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.*

The passage in the Liturgy of S. James is so nearly similar that it is not necessary to transcribe it. It must be obvious that this similarity of thought and language could not be accidental. They are manifestly variations of one common formula.

In the general arrangement of the earliest Christian Liturgies, or services for the celebration of the Eucharist, there is a close correspondence. In all of them the service is divided into several distinct parts, which follow each other in the same order. This uniformity of plan is a more cogent proof of the common origin of the Liturgies than is the similarity of particular passages in them. Occasional resemblances of phrases might possibly—though not probably—be fortuitous. But identity of arrangement of the service could not be mere chance-work. If we find—as we do find—that the plan or method of the Liturgies is the same, the conclusion is irresistible that they are all formed upon the same model.¹

In the first place, the service was broadly divided into two distinct parts—the *proanaphoral* part (the ante-communion), at which the whole congregation, including catechumens, penitents, and unbaptised persons were present, and the *anaphora* or oblation, at which the 'faithful' only were present.

The *proanaphoral* part or ante-communion included prayers, psalms, and lessons from the Scriptures, and a homily or sermon. This portion of the service concluded with a benediction and doxology, and then a deacon directed the unbaptised to withdraw.²

¹ Any public service of prayer or psalmody has, from the earliest days of the Church, been called a Liturgia or Liturgy; but the word is more especially used to denote the Eucharist service.

² In the *Apostolic Constitutions* this direction is expressed as follows: 'Let

The anaphora commences with prayers for the faithful, introductory to oblation itself.

The anaphora is substantially the same in all the Liturgies, and the following essential parts belong to them all without exception :—

The kiss of peace.
 The form 'Lift up your hearts.'¹
 The *Tersanctus*, or triumphal hymn.
 The words of institution of the bread and of the wine.
 The oblation.
 The consecration.
 Intercession for the quick and dead.
 The Lord's Prayer.
 The fraction, or breaking of the bread.
 The Communion.

The ancient liturgies here cited so closely agree that they must have had a common origin. It is true that they are not word for word alike, but to use a familiar figure, though their features are not identical, there is such a strong family likeness that they must all have had the same parentage.

none of the catechumens, let none of the hearers, let none of the unbelievers, let none of the heterodox stay here.' Then follows a curious rubrical direction, which shows that this service was used in a hot climate: 'Let two of the deacons on each side of the altar hold a fan made of thin membranes or of feathers of the peacock or of fine cloth; and let them silently drive away the small flying insects, that they may not come near the cups.'

¹ This portion of the service is nearly alike in the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the *Liturgy of S. James*.

APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS.

High Priest. Lift up your mind.
People. We lift it up unto the Lord.
High Priest. Let us give thanks to the Lord.
People. It is meet and right so to do.
High Priest. It is very meet and right before all things to sing a hymn unto Thee who art the true God.

Some of the prayers which follow the Communion closely resemble each other. Thus: 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord' occurs in both Liturgies, and 'We thank Thee that Thou hast thought us worthy to partake of Thy holy mysteries,' &c., is nearly the same in both.

LITURGY OF S. JAMES.

Priest. Let us lift up our minds and hearts.
People. It is becoming and right.
Priest. Verily it is becoming and right and proper and due to praise Thee, to bless Thee, to worship Thee, to glorify Thee, to give Thee thanks, Maker of every creature visible and invisible.

What, then, is the source from which they are derived? This question has given rise to much controversy; but one thing is clear almost beyond dispute, that the source—whatever it is—cannot be much later in date than the commencement of the Apostolic era. The most probable theory is that the Liturgies have an Apostolic origin, that they contain the Apostolic form first handed down by tradition and then committed to writing; but that the text, as we now have it, has been corrupted by later additions and interpolations.¹

There is nothing antecedently improbable in the idea that the apostles sanctioned the use of fixed liturgical forms. They and their disciples had been familiar with the prayers of the synagogue and the temple, and probably knew them by rote. It was therefore far more likely that they should adopt and prescribe forms to a considerable extent fixed, than that they should leave each congregation to institute services of its own devising. On the other hand, the variations of the Liturgies as we now have them seem to show that there was not absolute uniformity, but that various churches had their own local 'uses.'

The Apostle Paul exhorts Timothy—'Hold the form of salutary words, which thou hast heard from me.'² The expression is a very remarkable one. The word here translated 'form' means etymologically a sketch or outline, and is used to denote any written work which is of the nature of an abstract or compendium.³ In the present case the 'form' was not written, for it is said to have been 'heard,' and therefore must have been delivered orally. The most natural explanation is that the apostle had delivered to his disciple by

¹ The Rev. J. Mason Neale, who devoted a large part of his life to the study of this subject, sums up the result in the following words:—'These Liturgies, though not composed by the apostles whose names they bear, were the legitimate development of their unwritten tradition respecting the Christian sacrifice; the words, probably in the most important parts, the general tenor in all portions descending from the Apostolic authors.'

² ὑποτύπωσιν ἔχε ὑγιαίνοντων λόγων (2 Tim. i. 13).

³ Thus Empiricus gives the title *ὑποτύψεις* to his outline of the Pyrrhonic philosophy, and Clement of Alexandria gives the same title to his abridgment of the Scriptures.

word of mouth—not a complete liturgy—but the outline of one.

We have seen that in the earliest days of Christianity the events of the Gospel were taught orally, and that some years elapsed before they were recorded in the written Gospels. The same process seems to have been adopted with regard to the Liturgy. At first it was communicated by word of mouth, but experience of the fallibility of memory soon showed the expediency of reducing it to writing. This hypothesis serves to explain both the similarities and the dissimilarities of the extant Liturgies. What was delivered traditionally was not a complete form but an outline. Consequently, the extant Liturgies are alike in the main, but not verbally identical.

There is—as we have endeavoured to show—reason to believe that some written forms existed, and were in use in churches in the time of the apostles. To the arguments adduced in support of that conclusion the following may be added.

In the First Epistle to the Corinthians this passage occurs :—

As it is written, Things which eye saw not and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, what things God prepared for them that love Him.¹

These words are a quotation, for they are introduced by the phrase, ‘As it is written.’ But where are they written? It is usual to refer them to Isaiah lxiv.; and in the Authorised Version there is some resemblance, but the translation is not accurate. The following is believed to be correct :—

Even of old men had not heard, had not perceived by the ears,
And eye had not seen an Elohim beside thee,
That would work for him that waiteth for thee.²

Here, though one or two words are similar to those of S. Paul, the general sense is quite different; for Isaiah refers to seeing Elohim, whereas S. Paul refers to *not* seeing things prepared for those who love God. If we turn to the Septua-

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 9.

² *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, translated from the Hebrew by the Rev. J. M. Rodwell.

gint Version, which S. Paul generally quotes, the difference is still more striking. But if we turn to the Liturgy of S. James we find the passage identically as S. Paul has given it, excepting a slight variation in the last two words¹:—

Beseeching Thee that Thou . . . wilt freely give us Thy heavenly and eternal gifts, which eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard, and which hath not entered into the heart of man what things, O God, Thou hast prepared for them that love Thee.

The inference is irresistible that S. Paul quotes from the Liturgy of S. James, or from some earlier form which has been incorporated into that Liturgy.²

It has been already observed that the oldest liturgies differ from each other considerably. Besides this variation a considerable latitude in the use of special prayers was allowed. Tertullian, writing probably about the close of the second century, says, 'There are petitions which are made according to the circumstances of each individual. Our additional wants have the right—after beginning with the legitimate and customary prayers as a foundation—of raising an outer superstructure of petitions, yet with remembrance of the precepts.'³

We learn from this remarkable passage that in addition to the settled forms—the legitimate and customary prayers, as Tertullian styles them—others of a special nature were used with reference to the circumstances of different congregations.

A still earlier writer, Justin Martyr, gives an account of

¹ In the Epistle to the Corinthians the words are: *Α ὀφθαλμοῖς οὐκ εἶδε, καὶ οὐς οὐκ ἤκουσε, καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίαν ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀνέβη ἃ ἡτοίμασεν ὁ Θεὸς τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν. In the *Liturgy of S. James*, the words are identically the same, except the last two, ἀγαπῶσι σε, 'those who love Thee,' instead of 'those who love Him.'

In the *Liturgy of S. Mark* (c. 15) there is the same passage almost word for word.

² There is a long account of the controversy on this subject in Field's *Apostolic Liturgy*, App. IV.

³ Tertullian, *De Orat.* c. 10.

the Christian prayers, which closely accords with the earliest liturgies, and shows that some of them or very similar forms were in use in his times.¹ After describing the ceremony of baptism he proceeds to describe the first communion of the person baptised, and then the ordinary celebration of the Eucharist on Sundays.

But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptised (illuminated) person, and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our works also to be found good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water, and he taking them gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at his hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying 'Amen.' This word 'Amen' answers in the Hebrew language to *yévoito* (so be it).

And when the president has given thanks and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.

And this food is called among us *Eὐχαριστία* (the Eucharist), of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do

¹ Justin Martyr was born about the close of the first century. The 'Apology' from which this extract is taken was written about A.D. 133. Parts of the passage have been given in previous chapters, but the whole is quoted here for convenience of reference.

we receive these ; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His Word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.

For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them ; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, ' This do ye in remembrance of Me ; this is My body ; ' and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, ' This is My blood, ' and gave it to them also ; which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn.

And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy, and we always keep together, and for all things wherewith we are supplied we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place : and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits ; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying ' Amen ' ; and there is a distribution to each and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well-to-do and willing give what each thinks fit, and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows, and those who through sickness or any other cause are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God,

having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world, and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them those things which we have submitted to you for your consideration.

The whole of this passage deserves attentive perusal. In the first place, it is obvious that Justin is describing a settled and regulated form of public worship adopted by Christians generally. It is equally clear that the prayers to which he refers were in a prescribed form, for he mentions in detail the subjects comprised in them.

If now we compare his description with the Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions and the Liturgy of St. James, we shall find that it closely agrees with them. For the purpose of this comparison, Justin's two accounts of the Eucharistic service will be collated: and the several incidents noticed in the order in which they occur in the service.

1. In Justin's Apology and in the Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions there is a particular Church officer called a reader, who is distinct from the presbyters and deacons, and commences the service with Lessons from the Old and New Testament.

2. In the Apology, as soon as the Lessons are concluded the bishop or presbyter preaches a sermon. This agrees with the Liturgy just mentioned and that of St. James.¹

3. Next follow 'hearty prayers in common,' that is, by the whole congregation for themselves, for the baptised person, and for all others in every place, that 'we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our works also to be found citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation.' This common prayer by the whole congregation follows precisely in the same order in the two liturgies.² The subjects of these supplications

¹ *Apostolic Constitutions*, lib. viii. c. 5. *Liturgy of St. James*, c. 11.

² In the *Liturgy of St. James*, c. 12: 'Let us all say, Lord be merciful, &c.' In the *Apostolic Constitutions*, c. 9: 'Let us all intreat God through His Christ; let us all earnestly beseech God through His Christ.'

are the same. They are prayers for all sorts and conditions of men, and conclude in the Apostolic Constitutions with a prayer that God 'may preserve us unto His everlasting kingdom,' and in the Liturgy of S. James, 'that the close of our lives may be Christian and without shame, and a good plea at the dread and awful judgment-seat of Christ.'¹

4. After this common prayer in the Apology follows the kiss of peace, which is also in the two Liturgies.² In all the three this rite occurs after the first prayer and before the oblation.

5. After the kiss of peace, the Apostolic Constitutions state (c. 12) that a collection is made and 'the deacons bring the gifts to the bishop at the altar.' The Liturgy of S. James notices the 'gifts' in the same part of the service. Justin also notices them, but does not expressly state at what part of the service they are offered.

6. Next, 'there is brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mingled with water.' The same direction is given in both liturgies: and in both the cup contains wine mixed with water.³

7. Next, according to Justin, the president offers praise to God 'at considerable length.' This precisely corresponds with the great Eucharistic prayer in both Liturgies. This prayer is, as Justin describes it, of great length.⁴ In the two Liturgies there is a preface commemorating several of the patriarchs of

¹ It is, however, right to add that this common prayer in the *Apostolic Constitutions* follows the dismissal of the catechumens; but in the *Liturgy of S. James* precedes their dismissal.

² 'Salute ye one another with the holy kiss,' *Apostolic Constitutions*, b. viii. c. 11. 'Let us salute one another with a holy kiss' (*S. James*, c. 20).

³ This appears by the words of institution in both Liturgies. 'In like manner also He took the cup and mixed it of wine and water, and sanctified it' (*Apostolic Constitutions*). 'In like manner after supper He took the cup, and having mixed wine and water' (*Liturgy of S. James*).

⁴ In the *Liturgy of S. James* it is prefaced with this note: 'Then the priest at great length.' Some passages are very similar in character in both Liturgies. Thus in the *Liturgy of S. James* we have this:—

'O God, look upon us, and have regard to this our reasonable service, and accept it as Thou didst accept the gifts of Abel, the sacrifices of Noah, the priestly offices of Moses and Aaron, the peace-offerings of Samuel, the repentance of David, the incense of Zacharias.'

the Old Testament. Then comes the triumphal hymn, the *Tersanctus*. Next follows in both a commemoration of the life of Christ similar in both Liturgies, but much longer in the Apostolic Constitutions than in the Liturgy of S. James. Next come the words of the institution of the bread and of the wine, which are nearly identical in the two offices.

In the Apology Justin says that the president offers thanks for our being counted worthy to receive these things at his hands. In the Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions there is a passage exactly in accordance with this: 'Giving Thee thanks through him that Thou hast thought us worthy to stand before Thee and to sacrifice to Thee;' and there is a very similar passage in the Liturgy of S. James: 'We render thanks to Thee, Christ our God, that Thou hast made us worthy to partake of Thy body and blood for the remission of sins and for life everlasting' (c. 43).

8. Justin states that the people give their assent to the Eucharistic prayer by saying 'Amen.' This response occurs several times in the Eucharistic prayer of the two Liturgies.

9. In the Apology it is twice stated that the elements are given to each communicant singly. In the Apostolic Constitutions the form of communion agrees with this.¹

10. Justin says part of the consecrated elements are taken by the deacons to those who are absent. The Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions has this direction: 'And when all, both men and women, have partaken, let the deacons carry what remains into the sacristy.' Probably from the sacristy the elements were subsequently taken to absent members of the Church.

The correspondence between Justin's description of the Eucharist and the two ancient Liturgies is close and minute.

In the *Apostolic Constitutions*:—

'And while Thou didst accept the sacrifice of Abel as of a holy person, Thou didst reject the gift of Cain.'

Then the prayer goes on to refer to Noah, Moses, and Aaron, but at much greater length than the corresponding prayer in the *Liturgy of S. James*.

¹ And let the bishop give the oblation, saying, 'The body of Christ;' and let him that receiveth say, 'Amen;' and let the deacon take the cup, and when he gives it let him say, 'The blood of Christ;' and let him that drinketh say, 'Amen.'

Justin was born either at the close of the first century or at the beginning of the second. He was a native of Palestine, but the usual place of his residence was Rome. His account therefore may be taken to represent the usage of the Western Churches, whereas the two Liturgies of S. James and the Apostolic Constitutions are Oriental, and therefore represent the usage of the Eastern Churches. The close accord between the two ordinals shows that the practice of the Churches was substantially the same.

Again, the close correspondence between Justin's account and the two Liturgies is conclusive evidence as to the antiquity of the rites which they describe. There is no doubt whatever that Justin's Apology, addressed to the Emperor Antoninus, was written in the first half of the second century, when many of the contemporaries of the apostles still survived. Justin describes an established and settled form—and considering the veneration of the first Christians for Apostolic tradition, we cannot suppose that form to have been invented after the Apostolic age.

Even if we suppose these two Liturgies to have been written subsequently, the argument for the existence of Apostolic Liturgies is not weakened. At all events, the originals from which the two extant forms are derived must have been earlier than Justin's writings.

This position may be illustrated by a familiar instance. Suppose that in a book of which the date is certain, we find a minute description of an ancient coin, and that coins exist which exactly correspond with that description. It is utterly improbable that the coins were made from the description. The only reasonable inference is that either the coins are older than the book, or that at all events that the die from which they were struck was older than the book.

That there are later additions to the two Liturgies may be readily conceded. But making full allowance for this, so much remains that agrees with Justin's Apology, that it is simply incredible that the resemblance should be a mere accident.

There are three hypotheses—and three only—on which this resemblance can be accounted for. Either (1) the two

Liturgies are modelled from the Apology, or (2) the account in the Apology is based on the Liturgies; or (3), the Apology and the two Liturgies have an origin earlier than all three.

The first hypothesis is clearly untenable, for it would be absurd to suppose that two very distinct Liturgies, intended for actual use in congregations, were invented to suit a general account addressed to a Roman Emperor. It remains inevitably that these Liturgies are older than the Apology, and therefore are recensions or variants of forms used in the Apostolic age.

CHAPTER XX.

RITUAL.

THE first Christians worshipped in private houses. The apostles and their earliest disciples assembled for prayer in 'the upper chamber.' S. Paul celebrated the Eucharist at Troas in the upper chamber,¹ and this practice of using the upper rooms of houses for Christian worship continued throughout the Apostolic age and long afterwards.

The word 'church' frequently occurs in the Acts of the Apostles; but it means not an edifice but a congregation. Thus S. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, salutes Prisca and Aquila, and 'the church that is in their house,' and in his Epistle to the Colossians salutes 'the brethren that are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.'²

It is probable that edifices devoted exclusively to Christian worship did not exist until the third century. Tertullian, who wrote at the end of the second century and the commencement of the third, frequently refers to the secrecy with which Christians were compelled to assemble. Their religion, he says in one place, 'has as many foes as there are strangers to it: the Jews, as was to be looked for, from a spirit of rivalry; the soldiers, out of a desire to extort money; our very domestics by their nature. We are daily beset by foes, we are daily betrayed; we are oftentimes surprised in our meetings and congregations.'³ It seems that the Roman soldiers often were bribed to observe secrecy respecting the places of these meetings. Tertullian, in another place, strongly condemns this practice of paying hush-money. 'How shall

¹ Acts i. 13; xx. 8.

² Romans xvi. 5; Colos. iv. 15.

³ *Apologeticus*, c. 7.

we assemble? say you; how shall we observe the ordinances of the Lord? To be sure, just as the apostles did who were protected by faith not by money; which faith if it can remove a mountain can much more remove a soldier. Be your safeguard faith, not a bribe.' He adds that if they cannot assemble by day they can do so at night, 'and be content with a church of threes.'¹

Other places of assembly for Christian worship were the catacombs or cemeteries, and this practice prevailed not only at Rome, but also in Africa and Spain and throughout the East.²

There is extant a pathetic inscription found in the catacomb of Callixtus near Rome, which records that a priest named Alexander was dragged to martyrdom in the reign of the Emperor Antoninus (A.D. 138-161), while engaged in celebrating the Eucharist in the catacombs. In English the epitaph runs thus:—

Alexander is not dead but lives above the stars, and his body rests in this tomb. He ended his life in the reign of the Emperor Antoninus, who, foreseeing that great benefits would result, returned evil for good. While he was bending his knees and sacrificing to the true God he was carried away to execution. O hapless times in which, amid sacred rites and prayers, even in caverns we cannot be safe! What more wretched in life and what more wretched in death when they could not be buried by friends and parents! At length they shine in heaven.

During the first and second centuries Christianity was a religion unauthorised by the State. The first act of formal toleration occurred in the reign of the Emperor Severus, and

¹ *De Fugâ*, c. 14. In the *Apostolic Constitutions* similar advice is given: 'If it be not possible to go to the church on account of unbelievers, thou, O Bishop, shalt assemble them in a house. . . . If it be not possible to assemble them either in the church or in a house, let every one by himself sing and read, or two or three together,' lib. viii. c. 34.

² Rossi, *Roma Sotterranea*, vol. i. p. 85: Eusebius mentions that in the third century the Roman rulers in Egypt prohibited assemblies of Christians in the catacombs there.—*Eccles. Hist.* b. vii. c. 11.

³ Dr. Maitland, *The Church in the Catacombs*, p. 32. The translation here given differs somewhat from Dr. Maitland's.

this act constitutes an important epoch in the history of Christianity. That Emperor, whose reign (A.D. 222-231) was marked by gentleness and mildness, publicly conceded to Christians the right to worship in buildings of their own.¹

Up to that time the Christians throughout the Roman empire were generally compelled to worship in secret, and therefore their ritual was marked by simplicity. Moreover, the first Christians for the most part belonged to the poorest class, and the adjuncts of a stately ritual were therefore necessarily absent from their worship.

This ritual was in many respects similar to that of the synagogue, and the arrangements and furniture of the first Christian places of assembly resembled the Jewish model.

In the synagogue the ark which contained the books of Moses was placed at the end of the building which looked toward Jerusalem. In front of the ark was a platform on which the law was read and the sermon preached from a pulpit or desk. The seats of the elders were more elevated than the rest,² and the women sat apart from the men.

In the Christian Churches the holy table or altar³ occupied a corresponding position. This is inferred from the well-authenticated fact that Western Churches had their altars towards the east.⁴

¹ When the guild of tavern-keepers in the reign of Alexander Severus made complaint about a hired tavern being occupied by Christians, Alexander adjudged this place to them that God might be worshipped, thus conferring upon Christians the greatest possible obligation.—Pelliccia, *Polity of the Christian Church*, b. ii. s. 1, citing Lampridius, *Augusta Historia*, c. 48.

² Christ appears to refer to this usage when He speaks of the Pharisees loving 'the chief seats in the synagogue' (Matt. xxiii. 6).

³ It is remarkable that the early Greek Fathers avoided the use of the word *βωμός*, which denotes a heathen altar, and used instead the word *θυσιαστήριον* = a place for offering, which occurs in the Septuagint, but nowhere in classical Greek. See Trench, *New Testament Synonyms*, 'sub voce.' The Latin Fathers, however, use *ara* and *altare* to denote the holy table. Thus Cyprian speaks of approaching the altar of God: 'accedere ad altare Dei' (*Ep.* 63).

⁴ Thus Tertullian (*Apology*, c. 16) says the Christians were accused of worshipping the sun, and adds: 'this suspicion has arisen from our well-known custom of turning to the east when we pray.' Clemens Alexandrinus (*Stromata*, vii.) also refers to the custom. But there appear to have been some local exceptions. At Antioch in Syria the altar was at the west end.—Pelliccia, b. ii. c. 5, citing Socrates (v. 22).

The custom of praying towards Jerusalem is mentioned several times in the Old Testament. Thus Solomon, at the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple, prayed that the prayers of the people might be heard if they prayed 'unto the Lord towards the city which Thou hast chosen,' and Daniel prayed three times a day, 'his window being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem,' and David says, 'In Thy fear will I worship towards Thy holy temple.'¹

The most ancient description of the arrangement of a Christian church now extant is given in the Apostolic Constitutions²:—

Let the house be long and turned towards the east, with its sacristies³ on both sides towards the east like a ship. In the middle let the bishop's throne be set, and on each side of him let the presbyters sit down, and let the deacons stand near in close and girt garments, for they are like the mariners and managers of the ship. Let the laity sit in the other part with all quietness and order, and let the women sit by themselves, they also keeping silence. In the middle let the reader stand upon a high place. . . . Let the young persons sit by themselves if there be a place for them; if not let them stand up. But let those that are already stricken in years sit in order. For the children which stand let their fathers and mothers take them to them. Let the girls also sit by themselves if there be a place for them, but if there be not let them stand behind the women. Let those women which are married and have children be placed by themselves; but let the virgins and the widows and elder women stand or sit before all the rest, and let the deacon be the disposer of the places, that everyone that comes may go to his proper place.

From various expressions which occur in this passage in its present form, it may be ascribed to the third or fourth century;⁴ but it is interesting as a record of far older traditions.

¹ 1 Kings viii. 44; Daniel vi. 10; Psalm v. 7. ² *Apost. Cons.* b. ii. s. 28.

³ *παστοφόρια*. These chambers were used for various purposes. The sacred vessels and vestments were kept in them. In the Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions (b. viii. c. 13) there is a direction that after the communion the deacons shall carry what remains of the consecrated elements into the sacristy.

⁴ For instance, the place of assembly is called a house (*οἶκος*), an expression which does not seem to have been ever used after the third century to denote a church. On the other hand, there is a reference to the order of virgins which

From the first the singing of psalms and hymns was an important part of the service of the Christian Churches. This practice is frequently noticed in the New Testament. Thus S. Paul exhorts the Colossians to 'teach and admonish one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God,' and in reference to the worship of the Corinthian Church, he says, 'I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also.'¹

In the ancient Liturgies there are repeated references to the singing and the singers. For example, in the Liturgy of S. James we find a direction, 'Then the singers sing the Trisagion hymn,' and immediately before communion they sing, 'O taste and see, that the Lord is good.' Again, in the Liturgy of the eighth book of the Apostolic Constitutions is a direction to sing the Thirty-third Psalm while the people are communicating.²

The singing in the primitive church appears to have been antiphonal; that is to say, the singers and people sang responsively, some taking one verse and some the next alternately, or one of the clergy began to sing the psalm, and the people responded. This is clear from the expression in the oft-quoted letter from Pliny to Trajan, in which it is stated that the Christians were accustomed to assemble on an appointed day before dawn, and 'to recite a hymn to Christ as God alternately with each other.'³

Tertullian also refers to this usage. In describing the practice of his day, he says:—

The more diligent in prayer are wont to subjoin to their prayers the Hallelujah and such kind of psalms, in the closes of which the company respond. And of course every institution is excellent, which for the extolling and honouring of God aims unitedly to bring Him enriched prayer as a choice offering.⁴

was established in the third century. This institution preceded the institution of nuns, which commenced in the fourth century. These virgins were consecrated by the bishop, but, unlike nuns, generally lived at home.—See Pelliccia, *Polity of the Christian Church*, b. i. s. 3. ¹ Colos. iii. 16; 1 Cor. xiv. 16.

² *Liturgy of S. James*, c. ix. xlii.; *Apost. Cons.* b. viii. 13.

³ 'Carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem.'

⁴ *De Orat.* c. 27.

In the description of a place of worship which has been already quoted from the Apostolic Constitutions we find an allusion to the same usage.

When there have been two lessons severally read, let some other person sing the Psalms of David, and let the people join at the conclusion of the verses.¹

This practice of antiphonal singing was undoubtedly borrowed from the Jewish ritual. Philo Judæus expressly states that at the Festival of First-Fruits the beautiful hymn beginning 'A Syrian and ready to perish' was sung in the temple in antiphony. In his treatise on that festival he says, 'This hymn is sung from the beginning of the summer to the end of the autumn by two choruses replying to one another uninterruptedly.'²

The practice of antiphony was as old as the time of Nehemiah, and probably much older. He states that at the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem after the return from Babylon the singers were divided into two companies, which gave 'thanks in the house of God.'³

In the attitudes of prayer and other details there was a considerable similarity between the ritual of the synagogue and that of the church. It has been mentioned that in both these places of worship seats were provided for the congregation. But the usage of the temple in this respect was much more strict and severe. There, no one might sit in the 'Court of Israel,' where prayers were offered, were they never so weary or had they stood never so long, yet might they not sit down, neither priests nor people.⁴

In the synagogue and the church, however, the congregation sat during the reading of the lessons and the sermon, and stood for prayer. Accordingly we find it stated that Christ, after reading from the prophecy of Isaiah in the

¹ *Apost. Cons.* b. ii. c. 57.

² Philo, *Festival of First-Fruits*, c. 3. This hymn is noticed *ante*, chap. xix.

³ Neh. xii. 40.

⁴ The only exception was in favour of kings of the house of David. It was a maxim of Jewish writers that no man might sit in the court except kings of the house of David.—Lightfoot, *Temple Service*, c. 10.

synagogue at Nazareth, 'sat down.'¹ But during prayer, whether in the temple or synagogue, or in any other place, the attitude of the Jews was standing; though on occasions of particular solemnity they knelt, or prostrated themselves.²

That the rule was the same in the Christian Church is plainly shown by Justin Martyr. In a passage already quoted he says, 'The reader having finished, the president delivers a discourse, in which he instructs the people and exhorts them to virtue. After this we all stand up and pray.' Here the expression 'after this' clearly shows that previously the congregation had been sitting.³

To the like effect are the rubrics of ancient Liturgies. In that of the eighth book of the 'Apostolic Constitutions,' after the dismissal of non-communicants, there is a bidding prayer for the 'faithful,' preceded by this direction:—

Let none of those who ought not to come draw near. All we of the faithful, let us bend the knee. Let us all entreat God through His Christ. Let us earnestly beseech God through His Christ.⁴

During this bidding prayer all knelt. At the conclusion all stood up. This appears by the following passage at the end of the prayer:—

Let us rise up and let us pray earnestly, and let us dedicate ourselves and one another to the living God through His Christ.⁵

Now this precisely agrees with what Tertullian says in his 'Treatise on Prayer.' It is true that he wrote at the end of the second century, but there cannot be a doubt that he describes long-established usage. He condemns sitting, even after the prayers are concluded, as an irreverent attitude. In his usual emphatic way he argues that it is a posture 'most irreligious under the eye of the living God, while the angel of

¹ Luke iv. 20. So also S. Paul and his companions at Antioch went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day and sat down, and after the reading of the law and the prophets . . . Paul stood up,' Acts xiii. 14.

² Lightfoot, *Temple Service*, c. 10.

³ In the *Apostolic Constitutions* (b. ii. c. 57) there is a direction that the Gospel be read by a deacon or presbyter, and that all the congregation are to 'stand up in great silence.'

⁴ *Apostolic Constitutions*, b. viii. c. 9.

⁵ *Ib.* c. 10.

prayer is standing by, as if we are upbraiding God that prayer has wearied us.' ¹

With regard to kneeling he has this remarkable statement, that on the day of the Lord's resurrection, and at the season of Pentecost, the people did not kneel, except for the first prayer. And the reason he assigns is that those were seasons of exultation. But he adds that during fasts and penitential seasons 'no prayer should be made without kneeling, and the other customary marks of humility, for then we are not only praying, but deprecating the wrath of, and making satisfaction to God our Lord.' ²

The Christians washed their hands before prayer; in this respect also following a Jewish practice. By the Mosaic law the priests were required to wash their hands and feet before they offered the burnt-offering. ³ Tertullian expressly says that the Christians always washed their hands before prayer. ⁴ The hands were elevated above the head. S. Paul clearly enjoins this attitude when he says, 'I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands.' ⁵

In one particular the Jewish and Christian usage differed in a striking manner. Among the Jews men prayed with their heads covered, ⁶ whereas Christians were expressly forbidden to cover their heads during prayer. ⁷

The ministry of the synagogue and that of the early church closely resembled each other. In both there were presbyters, deacons, and readers.

In every important Jewish city there was a council which sat in the chief synagogue, and exercised judicial and political authority. The members of this council were called presbyters or elders, and each council had its president, whose functions were both secular and religious. He was the legate of the

¹ *De Orat.* c. 16.

² *De Orat.* c. 23.

³ 'So shall they wash their hands and their feet that they die not; and it shall be a statute for ever to them' (Exodus xxx. 20).

⁴ *De Orat.* c. 13.

⁵ 1 Tim. ii. 8. Tertullian states that the hands were not only raised, but expanded.—*De Orat.* c. 14.

⁶ Lightfoot, *Temple Service*, 'ubi supra.'

⁷ 'Every man praying or prophesying having his head covered dishonoureth his head' (1 Cor. xi. 4).

Church, and in that capacity recited the prayers or appointed someone else to recite them.

Again, there was a close analogy between the office of the Chazzan, or minister of the synagogue, and that of the deacon of the Christian congregations. Both acted as assistants to the presbyters and regulated various details of the service. The Chazzan took the roll of the law from the ark and handed it to the reader; and afterwards returned the roll to the ark. The Chazzan stood by the reader to observe whether he read correctly and performed various similar duties. We find in ancient Liturgies repeated mention of the corresponding duties of the deacons. They maintained order among the congregation, directed the people to their seats, told them when to stand or kneel, bade the catechumens depart before the communion, brought the oblations to the altar, and performed numerous other functions required for the reverent administration of the Eucharist. One of the duties of deacon, which was precisely similar to that of the Chazzan, was that of directing the responses. In large congregations the Chazzan waved a linen flag to indicate when the people were to respond.

In the synagogue readers were not a distinct order, but the president selected some member of the congregation to read the Scriptures, and the name of the person so selected was called out by the Chazzan, who delivered the roll to him, and received it from him when he had finished reading. In this manner Christ read in the synagogue of Nazareth.¹

The readers in the early church were probably selected at first in the same way, though they soon became a distinct order, and were regularly ordained.

In Tertullian's time it is clear that readers were a regular order in the church, and in the 'Apostolic Constitutions' there is a form for ordaining them by imposition of hands.

The appointment and ordination of presbyters in the synagogue and the church were similar.

¹ 'And there was delivered unto Him the roll of the prophet Isaiah. . . . And He rolled up the roll and gave it back to the attendant' (Luke iv. 17, 20). The attendant here mentioned (*ὑπηρέτης*) was the Chazzan.

The most ancient form for the ordination of presbyters now extant is contained in the eighth book of the Apostolic Constitutions. We do not know certainly when this form was composed, but it undoubtedly represents the ancient rule of the Church, that the appointment of presbyters should be subject to the approval of their congregations.¹

An essential part of the rite of ordination, both in the synagogue and the church, was the laying on of hands.

There is reason to believe that the ministers of the primitive church wore distinctive vestments and ornaments during public worship. They certainly did so early in the fourth century, for Eusebius describes them as those 'who are clad in the sacred gown.'² In the Liturgy of the Apostolic Constitutions (the date of which has been considered in the last chapter) there is a direction that after the departure of the catechumens, and before the consecration of the Eucharist, the celebrant shall put on 'his shining garment.'³

Eusebius has preserved a remarkable letter from Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, written in the second century, in which he states that the Apostle John at Ephesus assumed the *petalum*, or golden mitre plate, which had been the peculiar ornament of the Jewish priests.⁴

This letter was written about half a century after the death of the apostle, and probably when there must have been persons still living who remembered him. It is written, more-

¹ 'When he is named and approved, let the people assemble with the presbytery and bishops that are present on the Lord's-day, and let them give their consent. And let the principal of the bishops ask the presbytery and the people whether this be the person whom they desire for their ruler. And if they give their consent, let him ask further whether he has a good testimony from all men,' &c.—*Apost. Cons.* lib. viii. c. 4.

S. Clement, in his *Epistle to the Corinthians*, which undoubtedly belongs to the first century, expressly states (c. 44) that presbyters were appointed 'with the consent of the whole church.'

² Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. x. c. 4.

³ λαμπρὰν ἐσθῆτα, *Apost. Cons.* lib. viii. c. 12.

⁴ 'And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, "Holiness to the Lord." And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be on the mitre' (Exodus xxviii. 36, 37). Josephus asserts that the original plate was preserved to his own day.—*Antiquities*, b. viii. c. 3.

over, by a bishop of that very Church of Ephesus over which S. John had presided. Consequently, the writer was above all other persons likely to be well informed as to the practice of his predecessor. Lastly, the letter was a document of the utmost gravity—a formal and solemn protest of the Bishops of Asia against what they deemed to be an unlawful act of the Bishop of Rome.

It is not credible that such a document would contain unfounded assertions. Moreover, the statement that S. John wore an ornament similar to that of the Jewish priesthood is inherently probable; for we know that in other respects the Christian ritual was assimilated to the Jewish. Even if we take the statement as merely metaphorical—as some writers have done—that supposition leads to the conclusion that the writer compared S. John to the Jewish priests; and confirms the opinion that S. John wore sacerdotal ornaments.

There is a very similar record with regard to S. James, Bishop of Jerusalem. Epiphanius, a writer of the fourth century, states that S. James wore the petalum before the fall of Jerusalem.¹

Our information respecting the ritual and worship of Apostolic times is very incomplete. Much that was familiar then has been left unrecorded, simply because it was familiar, and of much that was recorded the documents have long ago perished. Still the veil of time is lifted here and there, and, by carefully putting the parts together, we are able to form something like a picture of the religious life of the first Christians.

That picture exhibits them assembling daily at early dawn in some upper room or catacomb, singing their morning psalm and praying fervently that the day might be with peace and without sin, as also all the time of their sojourning, and that He would grant them His angel of peace, and a Christian departure out of this life.² Then, after the blessing of the Bishop, the little flock went away to their daily labours.

¹ Routh, *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, vol. i. p. 381.

² *Apost. Cons.* b. viii. c. 37.

At nightfall again they assembled, and, after the evening psalm, offered thanksgiving to God for preserving them through the day, and prayed Him, by His Christ, to afford them a peaceable evening, and a night free from sin, and to vouchsafe them everlasting life.¹

This was their simple daily worship. But on the first day of the week the rite was far more solemn. Assembling before daybreak, they sang psalms and hymns in joyful antiphony, heard lessons read from the Scriptures, and a sermon. Then, after the departure of the catechumens, followed the most sacred rite of Christianity—the Eucharist.

On the Sunday night again they met, and ate together the Feast of Charity—as it is emphatically called—a means at once of giving food to the needy, and of joining the whole community in the bonds of temperate festivity and loving fellowship. The frugal feast was accompanied by singing and thanksgiving to God for His bounty. The hideous orgies and indecent revelries of heathen banquets found no place at the Love Feast. ‘As it is an act of religious service,’ says Tertullian,² ‘it permits no vileness or immodesty. The participants, before reclining, taste first of prayer to God. As much is eaten as satisfies hunger; as much drunken as befits the chaste. They say “it is enough,” as those who remember that even during the night they must worship God. They talk as those who know that the Lord is one of their auditors.’

But not always was this peaceful life possible. The first disciples were surrounded by enemies. Their religion was ‘unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness.’ They were hated of all, and their assemblies were liable to be violently invaded by ruthless persecutors. Yet, even then, it might be possible to assemble by twos and threes in some secret chamber or cavern, and pray and sing praises at midnight.

For what resistance could they offer to their persecutors? The powers of the world were all against them. Could they withstand the Roman licitor or the executioner who dragged them to crucifixion, or the brutal violence of the angry popu-

¹ *Apost. Cons. b. viii. c. 37.*

² *Apologeticu*

lace? No. They were liable at any moment to be tortured or put to death. But were they then quite powerless? Not so, not nearly so. They had a power greater than that of Roman armies, weapons more mighty than Roman swords. Faith, patience, and righteousness—these were the arms of Christianity—and by them the Empire of Paganism was overthrown. Would that we knew more of the lives of these Christian heroes and warriors ‘who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens.’

CHAPTER XXI.

WRITERS OF THE FIRST AND SECOND CENTURIES.

OF the spirit of the first history of Christianity there is no brighter illustration than the lives and writings of the first Christian Fathers. To them Christianity was very real—not merely a speculation to be weighed in the balance of opposite arguments, but something so absolutely true, so inestimably precious, that life itself—that is, this human life—might well be laid down, calmly and deliberately, in defence of it.

The Christian Fathers of the first and second centuries whose works are of the most importance for historical purposes are Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Origen. There are writings of all these authors still extant in a complete or nearly complete form. Besides them there are also numerous compositions of the same ages of which only fragments remain.

CLEMENT of Rome stands first in respect of antiquity. Whether he be the Clement mentioned in the New Testament¹ is a matter of dispute, but that he wrote in the first century, while some of the apostles were still living, is beyond doubt.

Considering his eminent position as bishop of the most important church in Christendom, it is remarkable that scarcely anything is known respecting his life. Irenæus, who wrote in the second century, gives this account of him:—

¹ In his Epistle to the Philippians, written at Rome, S. Paul says: 'I beseech thee also, true yokefellow, help those women, for they laboured with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers whose names are in the book of life' (Phil. iv. 3).

When the blessed apostles Peter and Paul had founded and established the Church at Rome, they delivered the office of the bishopric in it to Linus. To him succeeded Anacletus, after whom in the third place after the apostles Clement obtained that bishopric, who had seen the apostles and conversed with them; who had the preaching of the apostles still sounding in his ears and their traditions before his eyes; nor he alone, for there were still many alive who had been taught by the apostles. In the time, therefore, of this Clement, when there was no small dissension among the brethren at Corinth, the Church at Rome sent a most excellent letter to the Corinthians, persuading them to peace among themselves.¹

The succession of the earliest bishops of Rome is involved in much obscurity. Eusebius, who is generally accurate, agrees with Irenæus in making Linus, Anacletus, and Clement the first three bishops, and places them in the same order. Referring to the reign of Domitian, Eusebius says:—

In the twelfth year of the same reign, after Anacletus had been bishop of Rome twelve years, he was succeeded by Clement, whom, the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Philippians, shows to have been his fellow-labourer in these words, ‘With Clement and my fellow-labourers whose names are in the book of life.’

Of this Clement there is one epistle extant, acknowledged as genuine, of considerable length, and of great merit, which he wrote in the name of the Church of Rome to that of Corinth, at the time when there was a dissension in the latter. This we know to have been read for common benefit in most of the churches both in former times and in our own.²

In another place Eusebius states that the episcopate of Clement lasted nine years.³ If these statements are correct, it follows that he was Bishop of Rome from the year A.D. 92 (the twelfth year of the reign of Domitian) to the year A.D. 101, and consequently the Epistle to the Corinthians was written in that interval. Probably it was written shortly after the year A.D. 95, when Domitian persecuted the Christians, for there is

¹ Irenæus, *Heresies*, b. iii. c. 3, s. 3.

² Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. iii. cc. 15 and 16.

³ *Ib.* b. iii. c. 34.

an allusion to a recent persecution.¹ This is the conclusion most generally adopted by modern critics.

In the passage just quoted Eusebius identifies the Bishop of Rome with the Clement of the Epistle to the Philippians; but it is to be observed that Eusebius does so merely by inference from the language of the epistle, and not from any direct evidence. The inference from identity of the names is of hardly any value, for Clement was an exceedingly common name. The Clement mentioned by S. Paul may possibly be the Bishop of Rome, and that is all that can be safely averred on the subject.²

Clement is said to have suffered martyrdom, but of this there is not sufficient evidence. Apparently, this tradition did not exist in the days of Eusebius, for he says that in the third year of Trajan's reign 'Clement, Bishop of Rome, committed the episcopal charge to Evarestus, and departed this life, after superintending the preaching of the divine Word nine years;'³ and the historian would hardly have expressed himself in this manner if he believed that Clement suffered a violent death.

There is extant an ancient homily, commonly called the 'Second Epistle of S. Clement,' but the authorship of it is disputed, whereas the genuineness of the first epistle is undoubted. It was constantly read in the primitive Christian Churches, not as Scripture, but for edification and admonition.⁴ This venerable document exhibits a profound knowledge of the Old Testament; and its high tone and dignified

¹ 'Owing, dear brethren, to the sudden and successive calamitous events which have happened to ourselves, we feel that we have been somewhat tardy in turning our attention to the points respecting which you consulted us.'—*Epistle of Clement*, c. 1.

² Some modern writers identify him with Flavius Clemens, cousin of Domitian; others make him a son of a brother of this Flavius. Bishop Lightfoot conjectures that Clement the Bishop was a man of Jewish parentage, a freedman, or the son of a freedman belonging to the household of Flavius Clemens.

³ *Eccl. Hist.* b. iii. c. 34.

⁴ In an epistle to Soter, Bishop of Rome, in the second century, Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, says: 'To-day we have passed the Lord's holy day, in which we have read your epistle; in reading which we shall always have our minds stored with admonition, as we shall also from that written to us before by Clement.'—*Eusebius, Hist.* b. iv. c. 23.

language, and the spirit of simple, earnest piety with which it is animated, render it one of the most precious monuments of ancient Christian literature.

POLYCARP, Bishop of Smyrna, was undoubtedly a companion of the Apostle John, and received instruction from other apostles. 'About this time,' says Eusebius, referring to the commencement of the second century, 'flourished Polycarp in Asia, an intimate disciple of the apostles, who received the episcopate of the Church of Smyrna at the hands of eye-witnesses and servants of the Lord.'¹

The lengthened life of the Apostle John, who attained to an extreme old age, connects the Fathers of the second century with the immediate followers of Christ. Polycarp must have been a contemporary of S. John for about twenty years.²

A letter of Irenæus, who was a pupil of Polycarp, has been preserved,³ which gives a graphic and remarkably interesting account of the familiar intercourse of Polycarp with the apostle. The letter is addressed by Irenæus to a friend named Florinus, with whom he remonstrates for holding erroneous doctrines:—

These doctrines, O Florinus, to say the least, are not of a sound understanding. These doctrines are inconsistent with the Church, and calculated to thrust those that follow them into the greatest impiety; these doctrines not even the heretics out of the Church ever attempted to assert; these doctrines were never delivered to thee by the presbyters before us, those who also were the immediate disciples of the apostles.

For I saw thee when I was yet a boy in Lower Asia with Polycarp moving in great splendour at Court,⁴ and endeavouring by all means to gain his esteem. I remember the events of those times much better than those of more recent occurrence, as the studies of our youth growing with our minds unite with them so firmly that I can tell also the very place where

¹ *Eccl. Hist.* b. iii. c. 36.

² S. John died probably about the end of the first or the commencement of the second century. Polycarp suffered martyrdom A.D. 167 at the age of about eighty-six years, and therefore must have been born about A.D. 80.

³ Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. v. c. 20.

⁴ Dodwell, in his *Dissertation on Irenæus*, supposes this to have been the palace occupied by the Emperor Hadrian when he visited Smyrna.

the blessed Polycarp was accustomed to sit and discourse, and also his entrances, his walks, his manner of life, the form of his body, his conversations with the people and familiar intercourse with John, as he was accustomed to tell, as also his familiarity with those that had seen the Lord; how also he used to relate their discourses, and what things he had heard from them concerning the Lord; also concerning His miracles, His doctrine; all these were told by Polycarp in consistency with the Holy Scriptures, and he had received them from the eye-witnesses of the doctrine of salvation.

These things, by the mercy of God and the opportunity then afforded me, I attentively heard, noting them down not on paper, but in my heart; and these same facts I am always in the habit, by the grace of God, of recalling faithfully to mind; and I can bear witness in the sight of God that, if that blessed and apostolic presbyter had heard any such thing as this, he would have exclaimed and stopped his ears, and, according to his custom, would have said—‘O, good God, unto what things hast Thou reserved me, that I should tolerate these things?’ He would have fled from the place in which he had sat or stood hearing doctrines like these.

From his epistles also, which he wrote to the neighbouring churches in order to confirm them, or to some of the brethren in order to admonish or exhort them, the same thing may be clearly shown.

In another place Irenæus states that Polycarp was appointed Bishop of Smyrna by the apostles themselves:—

Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also by apostles in Asia appointed Bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he lived a very long time; and when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught those things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church has handed down, and which alone are true.¹

One noteworthy incident in the life of Polycarp is his visit to Rome to confer with the Bishop of the Church in that city respecting the time of celebrating Easter. In another letter of Irenæus, of which part has been preserved, he says:—

¹ Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.* iii. 4.

When the blessed Polycarp went to Rome in the time of Anicetus, and they had a little difference among themselves likewise respecting other matters, they immediately were reconciled, not disputing much with one another on this head; for neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp not to observe it, for he had always observed it with John, the disciple of the Lord, and the rest of the apostles with whom he associated; and neither did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe it, who said he was bound to maintain the practice of the presbyters before him, which things being so, they communed with each other; and in the Church Anicetus yielded to Polycarp, out of respect no doubt, the office of consecrating, and they separated from each other in peace.¹

Of the numerous letters which Polycarp as Bishop of Smyrna wrote to the neighbouring churches only one is extant. It is addressed by 'Polycarp and the presbyters with him to the Church of God sojourning at Philippi,' and probably was written about the middle of the second century. In this epistle he praises the Philippians for their firm Christian faith, and exhorts them to adhere to the doctrine which S. Paul had taught them by word of mouth and by his epistle. After various exhortations to presbyters, deacons, and other members of the Church, Polycarp refers to the martyrdom of Ignatius, but apparently was ignorant of the circumstances attending it, for the epistle concludes with a request for information respecting him.

The martyrdom of Polycarp himself is described in an epistle addressed by the Church of Smyrna, of which he was bishop, to the Church of Philomelium, a city of the neighbouring province of Phrygia. There are probably some interpolations; but, excepting these, the document can hardly be of much later date than the death of the martyr. There are several reasons for this conclusion. In the first place, the general tenor shows that it is intended to give information of events which had recently happened; secondly, a postscript states that a copy of it belonged to Irenæus, a disciple of Polycarp; and, thirdly, a large part of it is transcribed by Eusebius,² who treats it as an authentic document.

¹ Eusebius, *Ecl. Hist.* b. v. c. 24.

² *Ib.* b. iv. c. 15.

The date of the death of Polycarp is well ascertained to be A.D. 167, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. For some time previously there had been a cruel persecution of the Christians at Smyrna, in which both the Gentile and Jewish inhabitants took part. Against Polycarp especially, as the chief minister of the Christian Church, their hostility was directed. After several Christians had been tortured and thrown to the lions, the multitude clamoured for the death of the bishop.

Yielding to the urgent entreaties of those around him Polycarp quitted the city; but he was pursued and brought back. The proconsul, who had reluctantly allowed him to be arrested, was anxious to save him.

When he was led forward a great tumult arose among those that heard that he was taken. At length, as he advanced, the proconsul asked him whether he was Polycarp, and he answering that he was, he urged him to deny Christ, saying, 'Have a regard for your age,' and adding similar expressions such as is usual for them to employ.

'Swear,' he said, 'by the genius of Cæsar. Repent. Say away with those that deny the gods.'

But Polycarp, with a countenance grave and serious, and contemplating the whole multitude that were collected in the stadium,¹ beckoned with his hand to them, and with a sigh looked up to heaven and said, 'Away with the atheists.'

The governor continued to urge him again, saying, 'Swear, and I will dismiss you. Revile Christ.'

'Revile Christ!' Polycarp replied. 'Eighty and six years have I served Him and He never did me wrong; and how can I now blaspheme my King who has saved me?'

The governor continued to urge him, and in vain threatened him with the wild beasts. At length a herald was ordered to proclaim in the midst of the stadium that 'Polycarp confesses he is a Christian.' Thereupon the multitude cried out, 'This is that teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, the destroyer of our gods,' and demanded that he should be burnt alive; and the governor gave sentence accordingly.

¹ The stadium was the place where public games were celebrated. It was an oblong area, round which were ranges of seats rising one above another in tiers.

According to the horrid custom of the times the executioners were about to fasten his hands to the stake by spikes, when he begged that he might be bound merely, saying that He who gave him strength to bear the flames, would also give him strength to remain unmoved on the pyre.

This last request was granted; and being bound to the stake, he uttered this beautiful prayer:—

Father of Thy well-beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the knowledge of Thee, the God of angels and powers and all creation, and of all the family of the righteous that live before Thee, I bless Thee that Thou hast thought me worthy of the present day and hour, to have a share in the number of the martyrs and in the cross of Christ unto the resurrection of eternal life, both of the soul and body, in the incorruptible felicity of the Holy Spirit, among whom may I be received in Thy sight this day as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, as Thou, the faithful and true God, hast prepared, hast revealed, and fulfilled. Wherefore, on this account and for all things, I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee through the eternal High Priest Jesus Christ, Thy well-beloved Son, through whom glory be to Thee with Him in the Holy Ghost, both now and evermore. Amen.

The flames did not immediately seize upon his body; so one of the executioners—in mercy perhaps—plunged a sword into his body, and so ended his sufferings. The centurion then placed the body in the midst of the fire and burnt it, ‘according to the custom of the Gentiles.’

Thus at last, taking up his bones, valued more than precious stones, more tried than gold, we deposited them where they should be. There also, as far as we can, the Lord will grant us to celebrate the natal day of his martyrdom in joy and gladness, both in commemoration of those who finished their contest before, and to prepare those that shall be hereafter.

There is something wonderfully touching in this reference to the ‘natal day of his martyrdom.’ Those who wrote it thought that the day on which Polycarp was pierced by the sword was not the day of his death, but the birthday of a new and happier life.

IGNATIUS, who was a contemporary and friend of Polycarp, and therefore coeval with some of the apostles, was, according to Eusebius, the second Bishop of Antioch.¹

Antioch, the capital of Syria, has a prominent place in early Christian history. This vast and opulent city ranked as the third in importance in the Roman provinces, one of the earliest and most renowned Christian Churches was established in this place, and it had this remarkable distinction that 'the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.'² Both S. Peter and S. Paul laboured long in the cause of Christianity there, and from Antioch S. Paul set out on several of his missionary enterprises.

Ignatius was, like Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John, and must have become Bishop of Antioch a considerable time before the close of the first century.

There is extant a venerable document, called the 'Martyrdom of Ignatius,' written probably by some of his companions, which gives a few interesting particulars of his life. He and his Church of Antioch appear to have suffered from the numerous persecutions in the reign of Domitian (A.D. 81-96).

Ignatius, the disciple of John the Apostle, a man in all respects of Apostolic character, governed the Church of the Antiochians with great care, having with difficulty escaped the former storms of the many persecutions under Domitian, inasmuch as, like a good pilot, by the helm of prayer and fasting, by the earnestness of his teaching, and by his spiritual labour he resisted the flood that rolled against him, fearing lest he should lose any of the faint-hearted and guileless. Wherefore he rejoiced over the tranquil state of the Church when the persecution ceased for a little time.³

¹ 'On the death of Evodius, who was the first Bishop of Antioch, Ignatius was appointed the second.'—*Hist. Eccl.* b. iii. c. 22.

² S. Luke has given a circumstantial account of the foundation of this church. Some disciples who fled from Jerusalem after the martyrdom of Stephen took refuge at Antioch, and preached Christianity there with such success that they made many converts. Thereupon the mother church of Jerusalem, according to her usual practice, sent missionaries to organise and confirm the new church. These were, first Barnabas, and subsequently Paul, who remained there a whole year (Acts xi.).

³ *Martyrdom of Ignatius*, c. 1.

The Emperor Trajan, in the ninth year of his reign (A.D. 107), was at Antioch, and threatened the Christians of that city with persecution because they refused to worship the gods of the Gentiles. Ignatius, in order to avert this danger, was by his own desire brought before the Emperor, and resolutely acknowledged his faith in Christ. Thereupon Trajan pronounced sentence as follows:—

We command that Ignatius, who affirms that he carries about within him Him that was crucified, be bound by soldiers and carried to Rome, there to be devoured by the beasts for the gratification of the people.

On his way to Rome the martyr passed through Smyrna, where he was greeted by Polycarp and the bishops, presbyters, and deacons of many of the Churches of Asia Minor.

At Smyrna, Ignatius appears to have made some considerable stay, and there he wrote letters (still extant) to several churches. The epistles which bear his name have given rise to much controversy, due, in a great degree, to the circumstance that Ignatius strongly insists on the importance of Church discipline—a topic regarded with disfavour by his most hostile modern critics. But of the genuineness of several of the epistles there cannot be any reasonable doubt. Eusebius gives the following interesting account of them:—

Being carried through Asia under a most rigorous custody, he fortified the different churches in the cities where he tarried by his discourses and exhortations, particularly cautioning them against the heresies which even then were springing up and prevailing. He exhorted them to adhere firmly to the tradition of the apostles, which, for the sake of greater security, he deemed it necessary to attest by committing it to writing.

When therefore he came to Smyrna where Polycarp was, he wrote the epistle to the Church of Ephesus, in which he mentions its pastor Onesimus; another also to the Church in Magnesia, which is situated on the Menander, in which again he makes mention of the bishop Damas; another also to the Trallians, of which he states that Polybius was then bishop; to these must be added the epistle to the Church of Rome.

After giving some extracts from these letters, the historian proceeds:—

But after he had left Smyrna from Troas he addressed in writing those who were in Philadelphia, and the Church of Smyrna and Polycarp individually, who presided over that Church.¹

It will be seen that Eusebius here notices seven letters written by Ignatius. That such letters were written is not disputed: but there is much controversy respecting the accuracy of the texts now extant. There have been preserved two Greek recensions, one considerably longer than the other. It is now generally agreed the shorter form represents most closely the genuine letters, and that the longer form contains later interpolations.

A remarkable addition to our knowledge of the epistles of Ignatius has been made within the last fifty years by the discovery of a Syriac version of three of these epistles in the monastery of S. Mary Deipara, in the desert of Nitria in Egypt. In the years 1838 and 1842, Archdeacon Tattam obtained from that monastery, among other manuscripts, an ancient Syriac version of the epistles of Ignatius to Polycarp, the Ephesians and the Romans. These precious documents, now in the British Museum, were edited by Dr. Cureton, who pronounced them genuine.

The Ignatian controversy has been carried on with an asperity due—partly at least—to theological prejudice. But the comparative merits of the texts is not a matter of essential importance; for, whichever be adopted, the testimony of Ignatius to the existence of three orders of ministers in the Church in Apostolic times is irresistible. The longer Greek recension is more diffuse on the subject than the shorter Greek form on the Syriac, but all three agree in inculcating, over and over again, the importance of unity in the Church and of ecclesiastical discipline. This evidence is not to be got rid of by the convenient theory of later interpolation, for if all the passages in which these principles are inculcated were eliminated, there would be scarcely anything of these epistles left, and that little would be devoid of meaning.

¹ Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. iii. c. 36.

The martyrdom of Ignatius affords a terrible picture of the cruelties practised against Christians, even under the comparatively mild government of Trajan. In his letter to the Romans, the martyr thus refers to the soldiers who guarded him:—

From Syria even unto Rome I fight with beasts both by land and sea, being bound to ten leopards—I mean a band of soldiers who, even when they receive benefits, show themselves all the worse. But I am taught by their injuries, yet am I not thereby justified. May I be benefited by those wild beasts that are prepared for me, and I pray that they may be found eager to rush upon me, which also I will entice to devour me speedily, and not deal with me as with some whom out of fear they did not touch. But should they be unwilling to assist me I will compel them. Pardon me; I know what is for my benefit. Now I begin to be a disciple. Nothing of things visible or invisible do I desire so long as I can gain Christ.¹

The journey to Rome was long and toilsome. The whole of Macedonia was traversed by the aged bishop on foot. From a port of Epirus he was conveyed by ship across the Adriatic Sea, all round the southern coast of Italy past Sicily, then northward until Puteoli came in sight. There Ignatius was eager to disembark, 'having a desire to tread in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul.' But a violent storm prevented this, and the ship sailed rapidly onward, until Portus, the harbour of Rome, was reached, just as the unhallowed sports of the Saturnalia were about to close. The bishop and the companions of his voyage were met by a numerous band of Roman Christians, who were anxious to use their influence with the populace to spare his life. To this, however, Ignatius would not assent.

Having persuaded them not to envy him hastening to the Lord, he then, after he had with all the brethren kneeling entreated the Son of God on behalf of the churches, that a stop might be put to the persecution, and that mutual love might continue among the brethren, was led in all haste into the amphitheatre, there being immediately thrown in, according to the command of Cæsar given previously, the public spectacles being just about to close (for it was then a solemn day as

¹ *Ignatius to the Romans, c. v.*

they deem it, being that which is called the thirteenth¹ in the Roman tongue, on which the people were wont to assemble in more than ordinary numbers). He was thus cast to the wild beasts, close beside the temple, that so by them the desire of the holy martyr Ignatius might be fulfilled, according to that which is written, 'The desire of the righteous is acceptable to God.'²

JUSTIN, who from the manner of his death is often called Justin Martyr, was a native of Samaria. He was of Roman parentage, and was born early in the second century, and therefore must have been contemporary with many persons who had seen some of the apostles.

Justin, who was addicted to philosophical pursuits, has given in one of his works³ a very curious account of his studies and search after religious truth. First, he thought to find it in the Stoic philosophy.

I surrendered myself to a certain Stoic, and, having spent a considerable time with him, when I had not acquired any further knowledge of God—for he did not know it himself, and said such instruction was unnecessary—I left him and betook myself to another, who was called a Peripatetic, and, as he fancied, shrewd. And this man, after having entertained me for a few days, requested me to settle the fee, in order that our intercourse might not be unprofitable. Him, too, for this reason I abandoned, believing him to be no philosopher at all.

Disgusted with the mercenary spirit of the Peripatetic, the inquirer next determined to make a trial of Pythagorean philosophy. But the celebrated Pythagorean teacher whom he consulted wished him to learn music, astronomy, and geometry. Those kinds of knowledge, however, were not what Justin wanted, and besides, he thought that they would take up too much time. So he next resolved to make a trial of Platonism; and this time he was more successful.

In my helpless condition it occurred to me to have a meeting with the Platonists, for their fame was great. I

The Saturnalia, or Festival of Saturn, lasted for seven days in the latter part of December.

² *Martyrdom of Ignatius*, chap. vi. ³ *Dialogue with Trypho*, chap. ii.

thereupon spent as much of my time as possible with one who had lately settled in our city—a sagacious man holding a high position among the Platonists—and I progressed and made the greatest improvements daily. And the perception of immaterial things quite overpowered me, and the contemplation of ideas furnished my mind with wings, so that in a little while I supposed that I had become wise; and such was my folly that I expected forthwith to look upon God, for this is the end of Plato's philosophy.¹

Justin then proceeds to give a remarkably interesting and graphic account of his conversion to Christianity.

And while I was thus disposed, when I wished to be filled with great quietness and to shun the path of men, I used to go into a certain field not far from the sea. And when I was near that spot one day where I purposed to be by myself a certain old man of dignified appearance, exhibiting meek and venerable manners, followed me at a little distance. And when I turned round on him, having halted, I fixed my eyes rather keenly upon him.²

Justin gets into conversation with the old man, and says that he delights in solitary spots, 'where his attention is not distracted, and where his converse with himself is uninterrupted,' and proceeds to a fervid laudation of philosophy:—

'Does philosophy then make happiness?' said he, interrupting.

'Assuredly,' said I, 'and it alone.'

'What, then, is philosophy,' he said, 'and what is happiness? Pray, tell me, unless something hinders you from saying.'

'Philosophy,' said I, 'is a knowledge of that which really exists and a clear perception of truth, and happiness is the reward of such knowledge and wisdom.'

'But what do you call God?' said he.

'That which always maintains the same nature and is the cause of all other things—that indeed is God.' So I answered him, and he listened with pleasure.

The conversation, which is too long to be fully transcribed,

¹ *Dialogue with Trypho*, chap. ii.

² *Ib.* iii.

turns on the attributes of the soul. Justin discourses on that topic after the manner of the Platonists. The old man, on the other hand, urges him to study the prophets of the Old Testament, for they predicted the coming of Christ, and their prophecies have been fulfilled. 'They,' said he, 'both glorified the Creator, the God and Father of all, and proclaimed His Son the Christ sent by Him.'

'But,' he added, 'pray that, above all things, the gates of light may be opened to you, for these things cannot be perceived or understood by all, but only by him to whom God and His Christ have imparted wisdom.'

When he had spoken these and many other things which there is no time for mentioning at present he went away, bidding me attend to them, and I have not seen him since. But straightway a flame was kindled in my soul, and a love of the prophets and of those men who are friends of Christ possessed me; and whilst revolving his words in my mind I found this philosophy alone to be safe and profitable. Thus and for this reason I am a philosopher. Moreover, I would that all, making a resolution similar to my own, would regard the words of the Saviour; for they possess a terrible power in themselves, and are sufficient to inspire those who turn aside from the path of rectitude with awe, while the sweetest rest is afforded to those who diligently observe them.

The Dialogue from which these passages are taken is a real or imaginary disputation with Trypho, a learned Jew at Ephesus, respecting the principles of Christianity, and contains an elaborate demonstration that Christ is the Messiah of the Old Testament. The controversy is carried on with courtesy on both sides, and each disputant is equally earnest in his attempts to convert the other.¹

Justin was a very copious writer. The two most important of his writings now remaining are the two Apologies. These are certainly the two earliest of the numerous ancient pleas for toleration of Christianity now extant. The first Apology is addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius² and the Roman Senate and the 'whole people of the Romans;'

¹ *Dialogue with Trypho*, chap. viii.

² Antoninus Pius became Emperor A.D. 138.

and the purport of it may be inferred from the commencement, in which Justin says that he presents this 'address and petition in behalf of all nations who are unjustly hated and wantonly abused, myself being one of them.'

The second Apology was addressed to the Roman Senate, probably in the reign of Antoninus Marcus Aurelius, and successor of Antoninus Pius.¹ In this work Justin appeals indignantly to the Roman Senate against the unjust conduct of one Urbicus, who at Rome had condemned several persons to death simply because they professed to be Christians. This Urbicus seems to have held the office of prefect of the city—a magistrate from whom there was no appeal except to the prince himself, or, as this Apology would suggest, to the Senate.

The two Apologies contain the most vehement invectives against the whole system of heathen idolatry, and accuses Jupiter and the other gods whom the Romans revered of ineffable vices.

Of course the man who could thus tell the Roman Senate and people that all that they held sacred was unspeakably and hideously wicked could expect but one fate. Justin threw down the gauntlet, and the constituted authorities very quietly took it up with a result which, as the human power was all with them, it was not difficult to foresee.

Some time in the reign of Aurelius,² but in what year is not known, Justin and several other Christians were accused before Rusticus, prefect of Rome, of disobedience to certain decrees³ then in force, by which Christians who refused to sacrifice to the gods were liable to be put to death. It is difficult to reconcile the passing of these decrees with the known character of Aurelius, who is universally described as a humane, as a benevolent prince. The probable explanation

¹ Antoninus Aurelius became Emperor A.D. 161. Eusebius (*Eccl. Hist.* b. iv. c. 18) says that Justin addressed to him *A Defence of Our Faith*, but whether that work is the second Apology now extant is a matter of controversy.

² Antoninus Aurelius died A.D. 180.

³ 'In the time of the lawless partizans of idolatry wicked decrees were passed against the godly Christians in town and country, to compel them to offer libations to vain idols.'—*The Martyrdom of Justin*, chap. i.

is, that like his predecessor Trajan he was actuated by motives of State policy, and regarded Christianity as rebellion against the authority of the State.

Eusebius has given an account of the martyrdom of Justin upon the authority of Tatian, who was a disciple of the martyr.¹ This account substantially agrees with the very ancient 'Martyrdom of Justin,' which concludes thus:—

The prefect says to Justin—'Hearken, you who are called learned and think that you know true doctrines, if you are scourged and beheaded, do you believe that you will ascend into heaven?'

Justin said, 'I hope that if I endure these things I shall have this gift; for I know that to all who have thus lived there abides the divine favour until the completion of the world.'

Rusticus the prefect said, 'Do you suppose that you will ascend into heaven to receive such a recompense?'

Justin said, 'I do not suppose it, but I know and am fully persuaded of it.' . . .

Thus also said the other Christians, 'Do what you will, for we are Christians and do not sacrifice to idols.'

Rusticus the prefect pronounced sentence, saying, 'Let those who have refused to sacrifice to the gods and to yield to the command of the Emperor be scourged and led away to suffer decapitation according to the law.'

The holy martyrs, having glorified God and having gone forth to the accustomed place, were beheaded, and perfected their testimony in the confession of the Saviour. And some of the faithful, having secretly removed their bodies, laid them in a suitable place, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ having wrought along with them, to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

CLEMENT of Alexandria, the head of the celebrated Catechetical school in that city, was born about the middle of the second century.

¹ Tatian is best known as the author of the 'Diatessaron,' which, as the name implies, is a compilation of the four gospels. He is said to have apostatised from the Church after the death of Justin.—Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. iv. c. 29.

In his 'Stromata,' or Miscellanies, he has given a curious account of his early education:—

Now this work of mine in writing is not artfully constructed for display; but my memoranda are stored up against old age, as a remedy against forgetfulness, truly an image and outline of those vigorous and animated discourses which I was privileged to hear and of blessed and truly remarkable men.

Of these one in Greece was an Ionian, another from Magna Græcia, a third from Cælo-Syria, a fourth from Egypt, and others in the East—one of whom was from Assyria, and another a Hebrew from Palestine.

When I came upon the last—he was the first in ability—having found him concealed in Egypt, with him I remained. He, like the Sicilian bee, gathering spoil of the flowers of the prophetic and apostolic meadow, engendered in the souls of his hearers a deathless element of knowledge.¹

The latest instructor to whom Clement here refers was Pantænus, who was head of the Catechetical school of Alexandria, which Eusebius describes as 'a school of sacred literature established there from ancient times, which has continued down to our own, and reputed to have been conducted by men distinguished for eloquence and study of divine things.'² Eusebius adds that Pantænus went on a missionary journey to India, and Clement succeeded him as head of the Alexandrian school. He had many illustrious pupils, among whom were Origen and Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem.

Clement became a presbyter and a missionary, and in that capacity visited Antioch. This appears from a letter addressed by the Alexander just named to the Church of Antioch, in which he says:—

This epistle, my brethren, I have sent to you by Clement, the blessed presbyter, a man endued with all virtue and well approved, whom you all know and will still more like to know, who also coming hither has confirmed and increased the Church of God.³

Very little more is known about him. He is generally supposed to have died about the year 220.

The works of Clement embrace a wide range of subjects

¹ *Stromata*, b. i. c. 1.

² *Eccl. Hist.* b. v. c. 10.

³ *Ib.* b. vi. c. 11.

and exhibit vast erudition. Doubtless the great Alexandrian library afforded him facilities for his extensive research. Indeed, without such a storehouse of learning near at hand he could hardly have composed his numerous elaborate treatises. His work, already mentioned, 'Stromata,' or Miscellanies, is thus described by Eusebius:—

In these 'Stromata' he has not only made an explication of the divine Scripture, but he also quotes from the Greeks, where he finds any useful remark elucidating many opinions held by the Greeks and the barbarians. Moreover, he refutes the false doctrines of the authors of heresies, and he unfolds much history, giving us the results of very varied learning.¹

The 'Hypotyposes' (now lost, except some fragments) contained an abridgment of all the Canonical Scriptures.

Among other works of this author which have come down to us are the 'Exhortations to the Greeks,' which contain a severe invective against the licentiousness and absurdity of the heathen mythology, and the 'Pædagogus,' which may be described as a manual of Christian duties. In this work Clement lays down minute rules of Christian conduct and morals, and gives a picture of heathen vices in the second century very similar to that given by Juvenal in the preceding century.

IRENÆUS, bishop and martyr, occupies a very eminent position in the history of the early church. It is now generally considered that he was born between the years 120 and 140. He was a pupil of the illustrious Polycarp, of whom he gives the interesting reminiscences quoted in the earlier part of this chapter. Irenæus became Bishop of Lyons in Gaul, A.D. 177, and, as we have seen, took a prominent part in the great controversy respecting Easter. His strong remonstrance with Victor, Bishop of Rome, who attempted to excommunicate the Eastern bishops, shows very clearly that the supremacy of that Church was not acknowledged by the rest of Christendom in the second century.

¹ *Eccl. Hist.* b. vi. c. 13. The fanciful title, *στρωματεῖς*, means patchwork, of which the coverlets of beds are sometimes made, and indicates the miscellaneous character of the work. For the original Greek title the synonym 'Stromata' is commonly substituted.

Of the death of Irenæus we know nothing with certainty. Some have supposed that he suffered martyrdom, but there is no authentic evidence of such an event.

The principal treatise of Irenæus is usually cited by the title 'Against Heresies,'¹ and refutes the speculations of early heretical writers and sects, such as Valentinus, Cerinthus, the Ebionites and Nicolaitanes. The fanciful theories of these mystics seem to us sheer nonsense. For instance, in the Valentinian system there is an imaginary being called Demiurge, the creator of the material universe, and above him in rank a certain 'perfect pre-existent Æon, whom they call Proarche, Propator, and Bythus, and described as being invisible and incomprehensible: eternal and unbegotten he remained through innumerable cycles of ages in profound serenity and quiescence.' Then there are thirty Æons 'produced for the glory of the Father,' whose names are duly recorded.

All this farrago of nonsense Irenæus refutes gravely and, it must be added, with intolerable prolixity. But his work, notwithstanding the uselessness of much of it, is valuable as an account of numerous sects which in the second century perverted the doctrines of Christianity and troubled the Church.

Among the most remarkable phenomena in early ecclesiastical history is the number of these sects which sprang into existence immediately after the time of the apostles. Hegesippus, a writer of the second century, says:—

The Church continued until then as a pure and uncorrupt virgin; whilst, if there were any at all that attempted to pervert the sound doctrine of the saving Gospel, they were yet skulking in dark retreats. But when the sacred choir of the apostles became extinct, and the generation of those that had been privileged to hear their inspired wisdom had passed away, then also the combinations of impious error arose by the fraud and delusion of false teachers. These also, as there were none of the apostles left, henceforth attempted without shame to preach their false doctrine against the Gospel of truth.²

¹ The subject of this work is stated by Eusebius to be the 'Refutation and overthrow of knowledge, falsely so called.' It is now known chiefly by an ancient Latin version, the original Greek being lost, except some fragments.

² Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. iii. c. 32.

TERTULLIAN, the earliest and most eloquent of the Latin fathers, was born in the middle of the second century.¹ He was a native of Carthage, and became a convert from heathenism to Christianity. Immediately after his conversion he was ordained a presbyter. His advocacy of Christianity was bold and fervid. At a later period of his life he was accused of adopting the errors of Montanus, a wild enthusiast, who practised extreme asceticism, and thought himself an inspired messenger of God. Tertullian, however, distinctly disavows all sympathy with the doctrines of Montanus, except those which inculcate austere discipline.

The very first place among the Latin Fathers must be assigned to Tertullian, on account of his great learning and great eloquence. His style varies, but is frequently adorned by beautiful imagery, and his works abound in stirring and pathetic passages. It may be safely said, that the key-note in his numerous works is the principle that the Christian must make no concession to heathenism. The soldier who is a convert must not wear the chaplet which is a badge of heathenism. The Christian woman must not marry a Gentile husband, who will compel her to do violence to her creed. Christians must on no account frequent theatres which exhibit spectacles of vice, nor the Roman games and festivals. The slightest semblance of toleration of idolatry is to be avoided, and the persecuted disciple of Christ is not to avoid martyrdom by flight.

Such is the general tenor of Tertullian's writing. Of his numerous works still extant the most important are the 'Apology' (*Apologeticus adversus gentes pro Christianis*) and the 'Præscription of Heretics' (*De Præscriptione Hereticorum*). The Apology addressed to the Roman magistrates is a plea for toleration, and warmly defends Christians against the accusations of their enemies. The Præscription is a refutation of heresies generally, and more especially of those of Marcion and the Gnostics.

ORIGEN was born about A.D. 186. When he was seventeen

¹ Some writers place the date of his birth as early as A.D. 136, others as late as A.D. 160.

years of age, his father suffered martyrdom with many others in a persecution at Alexandria. This so affected the mind of Origen, that he was with difficulty restrained by his mother from giving himself up to martyrdom.

This illustrious writer was a pupil of Clement of Alexandria, and at the age of eighteen succeeded him as head of the great Catechetical school in that city. Alexandria was one of the chief centres of Christianity, and this celebrated school must have had great influence in the diffusion of Christian knowledge. Eusebius, with whom Origen is a great favourite, gives many interesting particulars of his life. He was not only a great writer, but also an eloquent preacher and a bold and resolute upholder of the Christian faith.

After presiding over the Alexandrian school for upwards of thirty years he incurred the hostility of the bishop of that city, and retired to Cæsarea in Palestine. In the Decian persecution (A.D. 250) Origen was cast into prison, and subjected to such severe torture on the rack that he died shortly afterwards.¹

Of all his numerous works, the most important was the 'Hexapla,' so-called because it was arranged in six parallel columns. This work, the first example of a polyglot Bible, was extant in the time of Eusebius, but the greater part of it has since been lost. It contained the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, and other Greek versions.²

EUSEBIUS gives extracts from several other writers of the first and second centuries, whose works, with the exception of these fragments, have perished. For example, Hegesippus, who in the second century wrote a history of the Church in five books, is known to us only by the passages which have been preserved by Eusebius; and to the same means we owe some valuable information obtained from the writings of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, who had conversed with at least two personal disciples of Christ—Aristion and John the presbyter. The writings of Eusebius have great intrinsic merits, but their chief value consists in the preservation of those precious relics of primitive Christian literature.

¹ Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* b. iv. c. 39.

² *Ib.* c. 16.

Eusebius was born about A.D. 260, and became Bishop of Cæsarea A.D. 313. He played a prominent part in the great Council of Nicæa, which condemned Arianism and settled the Nicene Creed. He was a man of great erudition and a copious writer. Among his more important works are the 'Evangelical Demonstration,' which deduces from the Old Testament arguments in favour of Christianity; his 'Chronicle,' or Universal History, and the 'Life of Constantine.'

But the most valuable of all the works of Eusebius is the 'Ecclesiastical History,' which is a history of Christianity from the birth of Christ to the 20th year of Constantine, A.D. 324. In this work Eusebius continually refers to ancient authentic documents long since lost; and it is therefore a storehouse of some of the most ancient memorials of Christian history.¹

For example, in the very first line of his work he says that his design is to trace the successions from the apostles,² that is, the successive appointments of bishops of various Christian Churches from the time of the apostles; and he immediately adds:—

For this purpose we have collected the materials that have been scattered by our predecessors, and culled as from intellectual meadows the appropriate extracts from ancient authors. In the execution of this work we shall be happy to rescue from oblivion the most noted apostolic successions in the churches, which even at this day are accounted most eminent.

It is this access to and quotation from records no longer extant which gives the greatest interest and value to the writings of Eusebius. His evidence is not that of an eye-witness, but almost equally valuable, for throughout his work he cites with obvious care and precision documents not unlike our parish registers, which seem to have been kept with scrupulous accuracy.

Our account of the literature of early Christian history would be very incomplete without some reference to Josephus.

¹ Like the rest of the works of Eusebius, the *Ecclesiastical History* was written in Greek. It is a proof of the importance generally attached to it that sixty years after his death it was translated into Latin by Rufinus.

² ἀποστόλων διαδοχάς.

This illustrious Jewish writer does not indeed directly record any of the events of that history. But he narrates contemporaneous events at great length, and thus indirectly furnishes valuable information respecting the position and surrounding circumstances of the primitive church.

JOSEPHUS, the eminent Jewish historian, was born A.D. 37, and was an eye-witness of the final overthrow of Jerusalem—so that he was a contemporary of the apostles. By his father, who belonged to the highest rank or ‘course’ of the priests, he was brought up at Jerusalem, and according to his own somewhat vain-glorious account, he became a great proficient in his studies, and was commended by all for his love of learning.¹ At the age of twenty-six Josephus paid a visit to Rome. On his return to his native country he found it distracted by internal dissensions. The Roman invasion, which was to end in the final overthrow of Jerusalem, was impending. The city was divided into factions, some in favour of submission to the Roman allegiance, and some in favour of resistance. Josephus attached himself to the peace party, but during the war bore arms in the defence of his country. At the siege of Jotapata he was taken prisoner, but subsequently was released, and was treated with great indulgence by both Titus and Vespasian.

After the fall of Jerusalem Josephus settled in Rome, and lived in high favour with the reigning emperors. His first work was the ‘Wars of the Jews,’ in which he gives a minute account of the Roman invasion, and the siege and final destruction of Jerusalem. In this history he constantly speaks in favourable terms of his protectors, and dilates on the clemency of Titus and his anxiety to spare the city and the temple.

At a later period Josephus wrote ‘The Antiquities of the Jews,’ a longer work than the ‘Wars,’ and in many respects more complete and accurate. In the ‘Antiquities’ he narrates the history of the Jews from the very origin of their nation until the Roman invasion; and gives a vast amount of information respecting Jewish customs, religious rites and doctrines.

¹ *Life*, s. 2.

As Josephus was resident at Jerusalem during the Apostolic era, and wrote histories which covered the greater part of that period, it might be anticipated that he would refer to the rise and progress of Christianity. But there is only one passage in his writings—as now extant—in which the name of Christ is mentioned; and the authenticity of that passage is disputed.

Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man if it be lawful to call Him a man, for He was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to Him many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned Him to the cross, those that loved Him at the first did not forsake Him, for He appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning Him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from Him, is not extinct at this day.¹

This passage must have been written by a believer in Christianity. Jesus is said to be the Christ predicted by the prophets, and His resurrection is mentioned as an undoubted fact, and Christ said to have preached the truth. But Josephus was a Pharisee, and his creed was entirely inconsistent with a belief that Jesus was Christ, or that He rose from the dead, or that His teaching was true.

Again, this account of Christ is introduced by the phrase, 'there was about this time Jesus, a wise man.' The context relates to the time when Pilate expended the Corban or sacred treasure of the temple in constructing an aqueduct. In the 'Wars of the Jews' Josephus treats of the precisely same period, and relates the same incident of the construction of the aqueduct,² but in that work there is no mention of Christ. Why should he mention Christ in the one history and not in the other? If he believed that Christ the Messiah had appeared among men, he would have noticed that event in the 'Wars,' as well as the 'Antiquities.' To the devout Jews the advent of the Messiah was of momentous

¹ *Antiquities*, b. xviii. c. 3, s. 3.

² *Wars*, b. ii. c. 9, s. 4.

importance; and if Josephus thought that Christ had come in the flesh he certainly would not have dismissed such a topic in a brief abrupt passage in the one work, and entirely passed it over in the other.

The disputed passage is as old as the time of Eusebius, for he twice quotes it.¹ But it might easily have been interpolated before his day by some over-zealous transcriber. There are abundant instances of similar interpolations in ancient writings.

This concludes our very brief and imperfect account of writers of the first and second centuries. In order to know what reliance is to be placed on them it is essential that some general and broad principles should be observed in estimating the evidence which they afford.

We might summarily dismiss all this evidence, and say at once that it is all valueless, that the early Fathers knew nothing about Christianity, compared with what we know nineteen hundred years after the advent of Christ—that they were credulous fanatics, and utterly unworthy of belief.

This method has the advantage of facility. It saves a great deal of trouble. But, on the other hand, is it altogether unworthy of consideration that many of these writers had actually seen Christ or those who had walked and talked with Him, and that many of them submitted to cruel torture, and laid down their lives as a testimony to the faith that was in them? We are so familiar with the word 'martyr' that we do not always realise what it means. In modern times a profession of Christianity is a very easy thing. But in the first and second centuries it implied a danger of being stretched on the rack, or of being scourged with the rods of the lictor, or of being crucified, or thrown to the lions, or exposed to any other hideous atrocity which Pagan cruelty could invent. In those days the teachers of Christianity lived in constant peril of their lives, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that they adopted that path of peril from strong and sincere conviction.

¹ *Demonst. Evang.*, lib. iii. *Eccl. Hist.* lib. i. c. 11.

Besides, it is remarkable to observe the sobriety and the consistency of their testimony. First, as to the sobriety; in the authors of the Apostolic and the next age there is a remarkable calmness and directness of statement. The ecstatic visions, the supernatural marvels which disfigure later Christian writings, are not to be found in the works of the earlier Fathers. Secondly, as to the consistency of their statements. They could not, upon any conceivable theory, have communicated with each other, for they were scattered far and wide throughout the vast Roman Empire, and were for the most part strangers to each other. The information which they give is, for the most part, fragmentary and incomplete; and the very fact that it is not dressed up artistically is the best proof that it is trustworthy.

In estimating the value of this evidence it may perhaps be permitted to a lawyer to adopt an illustration from English law. Of all the branches of that vast subject there is no other which so strictly deserves the title of a science as the law of evidence. This part of our jurisprudence is an inductive science, founded on myriads of examples and the application of keen intellects to formulate the rules to be induced from them.

Now it is a fundamental principle of our English law to exclude hearsay and secondary evidence. A witness in general is not allowed to state from recollection orally the contents of a written document, nor to repeat information given to him by other people respecting matters of which he has no personal knowledge. To these rules, however, there are necessarily exceptions. The document may be lost; the eye-witnesses may all be dead, or, for other reasons, living testimony may not be procurable, and consequently there are many instances in which secondary evidence of the contents of documents is allowed, and hearsay evidence is admitted; as, for instance, with regard to matters of public interest and general notoriety. It is reasonably assumed that responsible persons in a position to know the truth of such matters would not publish notoriously untrue statements respecting them.

The rules of judicial evidence have been tested for centuries, and we may safely apply them to the testimony of the

primitive Fathers of the Church. They often narrate events of which they were not eye-witnesses; but that is a matter of necessity, and, indeed, is the case with all history. They state the contents of lost records, but they have no conceivable motive for misstatement. They were revered by their contemporaries; their sincerity is indisputable; they wrote with a deep sense of their responsibility; their testimony is uniformly consistent; and for all these reasons we may safely conclude that they are witnesses of truth.

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